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THE DRAGON AND THE DOG: TWO SYMBOLS OF TIME IN NAHUATL RELIGION

BY

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INTRODUCTION

For some two thousand years before the coming of the Spaniards to Mexico in the sixteenth century, a flourishing civilization existed in the central highlands. Although these ancient Mexicans were people of diverse interests, and settled in and around the Valley of Mexico at different periods, they shared a common cultural heritage. The Aztecs, or Mexica, ¹⁾ arrived in the Valley of Mexico sometime in the last half of the twelfth century to take possession of an area which had long been inhabited by other peoples. Tenochtitlan, their capital city, was founded around 1360, ²⁾ but the Aztecs themselves did not begin to strive for political dominance until approximately 1430. The Aztecs, then, were late-comers, a fact which suggests that their religion was a mixture of ancient and new, alien and native elements. ³⁾

The Aztecs, Texcocans, Cholulans, and others, inherited many of the traditions and ideas of the ancient Toltecs, including a common language, Nahuatl. ⁴⁾ Because of their cultural similarities and linguistic bond, they are referred to generically as the Nahuas, and their culture as Nahuatl culture. And one of their greatest achievements was the development of a complex calendrical system.

The Aztecs themselves seem to have looked upon this calendar as

1) The Aztecs were named from their mythical homeland of Aztlán. "Mexica" is a name derived from *Mexitli*, a name of the god Huitzilopochtli.

2) Cf. Paul Kirchhoff, "The Mexican Calendar and the Founding of Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco," *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Series II, Vol. XVII, No. 4 (1950). Cf. also Walter Krickeberg, "Mesoamerica," in *Pre-Columbian American Religions*, trans. by Stanley Davis (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968), pp. 37-38.

3) Krickeberg, "Mesoamerica," p. 38.

4) Other Nahuatl speakers included the Chalcans, Tlaxcaltecs, Tlacopans, and Huexotzincans.

the central fact of their lives. It was not only of importance from a practical point of view, but it filled a very large place in the ceremonial life of the people. The system was basically not too much unlike our own; and I think it is neither so mysterious, nor the history of its development so abstruse, as the many commentaries written on it would lead us to suppose.

I would maintain for example, that the system identified with the Aztecs of Mexico was an outgrowth, or a special form, of one fundamental calendar concept which had a very wide vogue in Mesoamerica. This system is undoubtedly more ancient, for example, in Honduras, than it is in the Mexican plateau. The Aztecs, as we have noted, appeared rather late on the scene, and tended to develop their own special nomenclature for the various elements of the calendar, evolving in addition certain special symbols. Thus the system in its broad outlines may be said to be much older than Nahuatl culture proper.⁵⁾ Many of the Aztec deities can be shown to have their origin in other cultures of the pre-Aztec past; and the same holds for many of their religious practices. As so often happens in the history of religions, when the priests incorporated the gods of conquered people into their own pantheon, they often identified this new god with one of their own, or looked upon him as an aspect of their own, or assigned him a minor role in the cultus.⁶⁾

Given the similarities in day-names throughout Mesoamerican cultures despite linguistic diversity, and the survival of inscriptions with readable daysigns from several centuries before the emergence of the great city states, the calendar may be viewed as of considerable antiquity and as basic to all Mesoamerican religions. It sets the time for celebrations and spiritual crises; it measures recurrent social time and recurrent individual fate.

Several factors combine to make the study of time in Nahuatl culture of particular interest to the historian of religions. First of all, there was a vision of time in which there were several successive worlds or "Suns," each possessing its own span of time, and each ending inevitably in catastrophe.⁷⁾

5) Cottie A. Burland, *The Bases of Religion in Aztec Mexico* (London: The Guild of Pastoral Psychology, 1964), p. 27.

6) Krickeberg, "Mesoamerica," p. 38.

7) For an excellent analysis, cf. Roberto Moreno de los Arcos, "Los cinco

Second is the existence of a double calendar: a basic religious count involving thirteen numbers and twenty day-signs which make up a 260-day cycle; together with a solar year of 365 days, divided into eighteen twenty-day months, with five extra days to complete the round. This double count was meshed so that the same combination of number and day-sign would occur in both counts every fifty-two years. Further computations involving the planet Venus resulted in still another cycle of 104 years, an "old age" (*huehueliztli*).⁸⁾ Both of these calculations marked times of crises when men anxiously waited to see if a new cosmic cycle would begin again. The movements of a number of constellations were apparently of great significance to the Nahuas, especially those forming Ursa Major (known to the Aztecs as the "tiger," Tezcatlipoca), Ursa Minor (given the name *citlalxonecuilli*), the head of Taurus (designated by the word *mamalhuaztli*, which was the name of the sticks used for lighting the new fire at the beginning of the 52-year cycle), and the Pleiades (called *tianquiztli*).⁹⁾ The significance lay in the fact that if the stars followed their regular courses, fifty-two more years of life would be granted the cosmos. The adding of new levels to the temple structures at the ends of these cycles furnished evidence for the significance of the beginning of each new cycle, which was celebrated by the lighting of new fires. Thus there was the idea of the movement of time in ever recurring series of sequences.

Third, the life-cycle of the individual may be seen to be bound to the

Soles cosmogonicos," *Estudios de cultura nahuatl*, VII (1967), 183-210. Miguel León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought and Culture; A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind*, trans. by Jack Emory Davis (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 48, has pointed out that the story of the "Suns" clearly demonstrates the existence of five cosmological categories: (1) the search for a universal foundation; (2) the division of cosmic history into ages or cycles; (3) the notion of the existence of primordial elements; (4) the division of the cosmos into quadrants; and (5) the understanding of cosmic events within a framework of perpetual struggle.

8) The Venus "year" was 584 days; 5 Venus "years" were the equivalent of 8 solar years, of 2,920 days. The number of days in 2 calendar rounds comprising 104 years is 37,960, which corresponds to the number of days in 65 Venus "years." Thus the date of the beginning of the Venus "year," the Solar year, and the calendar round would occur simultaneously every 2 calendar rounds. This was known as an "old age" (*huehueliztli*).

9) León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought*, pp. 50-51. The old pyramid of Tenayuca, near Mexico City, was successively enlarged by the Acolhuas, Tecpanecs, and Aztecs by constructing new levels at the ends of these 52-year cycles. The practice is seen to be common to many sites throughout Mesoamerica.

recurrent rituals of society in which social time is integrated with the movements of cosmic time.¹⁰)

These concepts may be seen to be vital for an understanding of Nahuatl culture, for it was upon such a view of the world that the Nahuas based their way of life. Their experience of time reveals the relationship between the individual and the world of the material universe he inhabits; that is, it reveals his being in the world, his existence. The object of this study, therefore, is to attempt to grasp the ways and modes of the Nahuas' attempts to know and appropriate reality as they found it in and through a particular sense of the nature of time.

Calendrical symbols of one kind or another occur on a variety of monuments, both of early and late periods. The Nahuatl words which were used as day-names are all names of actual animals, objects, or phenomena. There are several tendencies at work in the case of most of these calendrical signs to change their original character. In many cases this is simply the desire for decoration or ornamentation. It is my claim that while this divergence resulted in a number of different forms, nevertheless those forms may be seen not only to interconnect, but in many instances may be regarded as synonymous. Two of the most interesting of these are a series of interlocking complexes involving two symbols, the "dragon," or earth monster, and the dog, which relate to the manifestation of the time-sense in the religion and arts of Nahuatl culture.

THE EARTH MONSTER

For the ancient Mexican, the earth itself was a kind of monster, part fish and part alligator. Perhaps it was the so-called "cayman"

10) Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. by Philip Mairet (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), pp. 116-117; and León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought*, pp. 54, 55. This idea of "binding" is also applied to the years themselves, for a "bundle" of fifty-two years appears to have been basic to the Mesoamerican calendrical system. Note especially the carving on the Temple of the Plumed Serpent at Xochicalco, Morelos, in which a hand is shown pulling on a rope which ties two dates together, an indication of the completion of a cycle. Cf. Diego Durán, *Book of the Gods and Rites, and the Ancient Calendar*, trans. by Fernando Horcasitas and Doris Heyden, *The Civilization of the American Indian Series*, Vol. CII (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 391. The notion of "time-binding" and the "binding of the years" may be compared with the Maya notion of "burden."

from the rivers of the Gulf. It was also pictured as a fantastic frog or monstrous toad,¹¹⁾ whose mouth had great tusks and whose feet and hands were armed with claws. In the form of a frog it was called Tlaltechuhtli or Tzontemoc and was considered male, while in other forms it seems to have been a goddess. The matter of the sex of the earth monster is confusing in that it is both feminine, wet, dark and chaotic, and at the same time masculine, active, and generative; but the earth monster is more than these, for it also represents a cosmic totality.

It may be significant for our inquiry to note that L. C. Hopkins suggests that in China the tortoise was understood as another form of the dragon. He points out that the dragon appeared in many shapes, usually reptilian, sometimes lengthy like an alligator, and sometimes stocky like a tortoise.¹²⁾ The dragon and tortoise appear related to the cosmic process of rain which brings both new creation in the spring and abundant harvest in the fall. It is as this cosmic process is annually re-enacted that new creation comes and time is recast as Sacred Time.

In China, the bones and shell of the tortoise were used for portending the future movement of the cosmos. Cracks on the tortoise shell could

11) Water Krickeberg, *Altmexikanische Kulturen* (Berlin: Safari-Verlag, 1956), p. 185. Seler, "Über Steinkisten, *Tepetlacalli*, mit Opferdarstellungen und andere ähnliche Monumente," *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, II, Pt. III, No. 13, p. 741, describes a carved stone box (*tepetlacalli*) which is sculptured inside and out. On the inside is engraved the date *ce cipactli*, "one crocodile," the initial sign of the *tonalpohualli* which stands for the regents Tonacatecuhtli and Tonacacihuatl, "the lord and lady of sustenance," the representatives of the fruit-bearing surface of the earth. On the *under* side of the box is a picture of the earth toad, the devouring monster, symbol of the interior of the earth. There is also a *quauhricalli* described by MacCurdy, which has a figure of Tzontemoc, the earth toad, on the lower external flat surface of the bowl. Cf. George G. MacCurdy, "An Aztec 'Calendar Stone' in the Yale University Museum," *American Anthropologist*, n. s., XII (1910), p. 491.

12) L. C. Hopkins, "The Dragon Terrestrial and the Dragon Celestial; A Study of the *Lung* and the *Ch'en*," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (October, 1931), p. 805. In his article "Dragon and Alligator; Being Notes on Some Ancient Inscribed Bone Carvings," *ibid.* (July, 1913), p. 547, he notes that while the dragon may be earthy, reptilian, alligatorian, he is at the same time a being of the mists and storm-clouds, dragonic, monstrous, and allegorical. On the dragon, especially in China and Japan, see also Gustave Schlegel, *Uranographie Chinoise* (La Haye: Librairie de M. Nijhoff, 1875), esp. Vol. I, ch. 2; and pp. 453-9; G. Eliot Smith, *The Evolution of the Dragon* (New York: Longman's, Green & Co., 1919); and M. W. de Visser, *The Dragon in China and Japan* (Amsterdam: J. Muller, 1913).

relate the future of the cosmos, for the cracks were readings in the cosmic structure itself.¹³⁾

In noting the connection that existed between the gods of the earth and the gods of night and death, we see that Tlaltecuhltli, the frog, wears his hair curled in the same fashion as the deities who rule over the world of the dead.¹⁴⁾ Moreover, centipedes, scorpions, spiders, serpents, and other nocturnal and poisonous creatures which were constant companions of the gods of death are generally shown in the god's hair.

In the second chapter of the *Historia de los Mexicanos por sus pinturas*, it is related that after the gods had made the underworld, the various heavens, and the water with its deities, they made in the water a great fish which is called *cipacuacli*, that is, "like a cayman . . ." and from this fish they made the earth which is called *tlaltecli*, and that this fish is usually figured as god of the earth.¹⁵⁾

Garibay K., however, recounts the myth the following way:

... Two of these gods, Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcóatl send down from heaven the goddess of the earth, a horrible monster full of eyes and biting mouths. The earth was then full of water left from the previous destruction and over the water moved the monster. The two gods decided that the earth must be given form; whereupon they transformed themselves into two enormous serpents. One of them took the monster by her right hand and left foot and the other took her by the left hand and right foot. Together they stretched and pulled until she separated into two parts. The lower part rose and formed the heavens; the upper part formed the earth.

13) Of the tortoise's role in fortune telling, Rene Grousset, *Chinese Art and Culture* (New York: Orion Press, 1959), p. 14, citing N. Vandier-Nicholas in an unspecified work, writes: "The tortoise is the image of the world; its carapace is round above like the sky, square below like the earth. By virtue of this, tortoises have a stabilizing role; they support and bear certain islands of the ocean... In the archaic period, the tortoise-shell is therefore well qualified to assist in the knowledge of terrestrial and celestial things."

14) Codex Fejérváry-Mayer; *An Old Mexican Picture Manuscript in the Liverpool Free Public Museums* (12014/M... Elucidated by Dr. Eduard Seler, English edition by A. H. Keane (Berlin and London, 1901-02). On the left side of sheet 40 is the realm of the dead, the North, represented by the image of the earth-toad, who receives in his open jaws a packed corpse, while a side-way leads up to a dish containing the symbols of combustion.

15) J. García Icazbalceta, ed., *Historia de los Mexicanos por sus pinturas*, Vol. III of *Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de Mexico* (5 vols.; 2nd ed.; Mexico, 1941). Cf. *Codex Vaticanus No. 3773* (*Codex Vaticanus B*); *An Old Mexican Pictorial Manuscript in the Vatican Library... Elucidated by Dr. Eduard Seler*, English edition by A. H. Keane (London, 1902-03), p. 130.

Then the rest of the gods descended to console the goddess of the earth and to give her gifts. In compensation for her sacrifice it was permitted that from her body should come all that which man needed to live in the world. Her hair became grass, trees, and flowers. Her skin became the grass of the meadows and the flowers that adorn it. Her eyes became small caves, cisterns, and springs; her mouth, large caves. Her nose was transformed into mountains and valleys.¹⁶⁾

Thus the legend has it that two gods fashioned the world from the body of the goddess Atlantli, making trees from her hair, rivers and caverns, mountains and valleys from parts of her body. We are reminded of the Indian legend in which the gods at a great feast sacrificed the primal man Purusha. His spirit became the moon, his eye the sun, his mouth the weather god, his breath the wind, his head the heavens, etc. According to a south Chinese saga, the primal being was P'an Ku whose breath when he died became the wind, his voice the thunder, his left eye the sun, his right eye the moon, his hair the vegetation that covers the earth. The core of the myth is recorded by Bodde:

Heaven and Earth were once inextricably comingled...like a chicken's egg, within was engendered P'an Ku (a name perhaps meaning "coiled up antiquity"). After 18000 years, this inchoate mass split apart, what was bright and light forming Heaven, and what was dark and heavy forming Earth: Thereafter, living another 18000 years, Heaven daily increased ten feet in height, Earth daily increased ten feet in size. This is how Heaven and Earth came to be separated by their present distance...¹⁷⁾

All these sagas of creation reveal a conception to which one finds numerous analogies elsewhere (cf. Ymir, Tiamat, and Ekadath of the Iranians).

One of the earliest associations given to the dragon is that it represents water, which itself is a common symbol for the primordial chaos which must be subdued before creation can occur.¹⁸⁾ The Chinese notion of water is no exception, for the emperor must tame the waters of the flood to bring about a meaningful created order. He must slay the dragon in order to make it productive, for the dragon is that monster

16) Angel María Garibay K., *Epica náhuatl* (México: Bibl. del Estudiante Universitario, 1945), pp. 3-4. Quoted from Selma E. Anderson, "The Discovery of Corn," *Estudios de cultura nahuatl*, II (1960), 178.

17) Derk Bodde, "Myths of Ancient China," in *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, ed. S. N. Kramer (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961), pp. 382-83.

18) M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (N.Y.: Sheed and Ward, 1958), p. 210.

that represents a primordial chaos. One is reminded of the nagas of India and of the female monsters of the Middle East, like the Babylonian Tiamat, which must be slain by the god before order can be restored.

Tiamat is a dragon or snakelike monster, conveying in her form many of the chthonic nuances of both earth and the feminine... She is a symbol of the Great Mother, not only as wife and lover, but also as the avenger and devourer. As avenger and devourer she is related to the dragon symbolism.¹⁹⁾

On the other hand, the dragon also represents the forces of heaven, for the source of water which was upon the face of the earth was centered in the heavens, in the clouds and rain. "Dragons dwell in the clouds; ... they have charge of thunder-bolts; they pour down water from the skies making both field and women fertile."²⁰⁾

The prominence given the dragon in its aquatic setting attests to the general importance of the sky-monster configuration. The creature in *Codex Dresden*, page 74, has been identified as a crocodile by Förstemann,²¹⁾ as a lizard-crocodile-peccary-reptile by Tozzer and Allen,²²⁾ and as a "celestial dragon" by Thompson.²³⁾ Except for the absence of a rear head, it is a classic example of the serpentine-saurian dragon of the Maya with parallels in the sculptures and elsewhere in the codices. Thompson has held that the numerous bands of planetary symbols, from which rain is often shown falling, are intended as segments of the monster's body.²⁴⁾ If this is allowed, the configuration

19) Charles H. Long, *Alpha, The Myths of Creation* (N.Y.: George Braziller, 1963), pp. 66-7.

20) Eliade, *Patterns*, p. 207.

21) Ernst Förstemann, *Commentary on the Maya Manuscript in the Royal Public Library of Dresden*, Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Papers, Vol. IV, No. 2 (Cambridge, 1906), p. 265.

22) A. M. Tozzer and G. M. Allen, *Animal Figures in the Maya Codices*, Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University Papers, Vol. IV, No. 3 (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 287, 320, Pl. XXXII, No. 6.

23) J. E. S. Thompson, *A Commentary on the Dresden Codex, A Maya Hieroglyphic Book*, Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. XCIII (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1972), p. 88. He feels the representation is that of Itzamna.

24) J. E. S. Thompson, *The Moon Goddess in Middle America, with Notes on Related Deities*, Contributions to American Anthropology and History, Vol. V, No. 29, Publication 509, Carnegie Institution of Washington (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1939).

of the monster and the direct association of water with its body are well nigh ubiquitous in the codices. ²⁵)

Although various workers in the Maya field have associated the composite monsters which occur so frequently in the sculptures with water, Thompson has the most definitive statements: ²⁶) (1) the monster or dragon, in its connection with the sky, is probably to be identified with Itzamna; (2) streams of water are sometimes pictured in connection with this monster; (3) planetary sky bands in the codices, from which rain is commonly shown as falling, are conventionalized segments of the monster's body; (4) the *cauac* "bunch of grapes" motif, central element in the glyph for the day *Cauac* ("storm," "thunder," "rain") and one of the most securely identified water symbols, appears frequently on the body of the monster; (5) the moan bird, another water symbol, is frequently depicted immediately above the monster; (6) the fish and waterlily motif, "an undoubtedly aquatic symbolism," is often associated with the monster.

It is interesting that a representation of the Maya *tun* (360-day period) is that of the head of a long-nosed being, of either ophidian or saurian origin, which lacks a lower jaw, indicating a connection with the earth. Often this creature wears the *tun* headdress. In two full-figure representations of the *tun*, this head, with headdress, is attached to the body of a snake. The same is true of the example on the Leiden plaque. This snake is also the deity of the number 13, god of the day *Muluc*, "water," and as such is intimately associated with water. But the absence of the lower jaw and the presence of the headdress, which is often decked with vegetation, also worn by Mam, god of the interior of the earth, creates the possibility that this is the snake or crocodile monster which supports the earth. In any case, as god of the number

25) Robert L. Rands, "Some Manifestations of Water in Mesoamerican Art," in *Anthropological Papers*, No. 48, U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Bulletin 157 (Washington, 1955) p. 278.

26) J. E. S. Thompson, *Moon Goddess*, pp. 152-60; *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, pp. 11, 110-11, 274-5. Combining features of the snake and of an aquatic animal such as the crocodile, the composite monster seems truly to manifest a connection with water on both sides of its ancestry. But Herbert J. Spinden, *A Study of Maya Art; Its Subject Matter and Historical Development*, Memoirs of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. VI, (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 33, 237, sees a tendency for the Mesoamericans to inject something of the snake into myriad art forms. This may lessen the value of the serpent-derived motifs as evidence that the concept of water is involved.

thirteen, this creature represents rain; so once again the *tun* is portrayed by the glyph of a being connected with rain.²⁷⁾

In the Aztec calendar, the first day bears the name of *ce cipactli*. Sahagun relates in the fourth book of the *Florentine Codex*:

First Chapter, which telleth of the first sign, which was named One Crocodile, and of the good fortune which they merited who were born then—men or women. These same destroyed and ruined it because of their negligence.

Here beginneth the count of each day. Just as each week was reckoned, so each of the thirteen-day periods went taking its place until one year had passed. Once more at its start began the count of each day.

The first day count was named One Crocodile. It was the very beginning and precise starting point of all the day counts, whereby began, continued, and came to an end the year of 260 days.

These various days, as it was said, all were good. He who was then born a nobleman, it was stated, would be a lord, a ruler; he would prosper; he would be rich and wealthy. And if a commoner were then born, he would be a brave warrior—a valiant chief, esteemed, honored, and great. He would always eat. And if a woman were then born, she would also prosper and be rich. She would have drink and food available. She would have food for others to eat; she would invite others to feast. She would be respectful.²⁸⁾

The word *cipactli* may perhaps be connected with *tzipactli*, *tziuactli*, the name of a prickly plant which grows in the northern steppes, probably a species of agave. At least such a plant is to be seen drawn in the hieroglyph *tziuactepetl* on sheet 25 of *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*.²⁹⁾ But the day-count *ce cipactli* certainly indicates not a plant but an

27) Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, p. 145. Cf. Hopkins, "The Dragon Terrestrial and the Dragon Celestial . . ." p. 806, who notes that when the artist-diviner of the Shang era wanted a concrete image of the dragon for display in the service of prayers for rain, or to ascertain when rain would fall or hold off, he had recourse for his model to the contemporary alligator. Some were shaped with the long body natural to those reptiles, while others were carved with a tortoise shell configuration, to which was added the unmistakable large plumed and horned head of the dragon.

28) Bernardino Sahagún, *Florentine Codex; General History of the Things of New Spain*; Book IV, *The Soothsayers*, trans. by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble. Monographs of the School of American Research, No. 14, Pt. V. (Santa Fe, N.M., 1957), pp. 1, 2.

29) *Codex Telleriano-Remensis; Mexican Manuscript of the Office of Ar. M. le Tellier, Archbishop of Rheims* . . . (Paris: E. T. Hamy, 1899). Cf. Seler's remarks in *Codex Vaticanus No. 3773*, p. 129. Cf. also the derivation of Chavero as "first light from on high," in Cecilio A. Robelo, *Diccionario de mitología náhuatl* (México: Ediciones Fuente Cultura, 1911), pp. 99-103.

animal: one, however, which is similarly distinguished by a row of spines. Durán explains it as the "head of a serpent," and in *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* and in the other picture writings coming from the vicinity of Mexico City, the animal is often pictured with a forked tongue.

Now the serpent motif is extremely complex. For example, in *Telleriano-Remensis*, as in *Vaticanus* 3738, the god Quetzalcóatl (who with *ce itzcuintli*, "one dog," begins a section of the *Tonalamatl*) is drawn as a feathered serpent. But the parallel passages in *Codex Borgia*, plate 67, and *Codex Vaticanus* 3773, plate 62, show, instead of the feathered serpent, a dragon-resembling monster which reaches out with a claw. That this dragon is Quetzalcóatl, however, is indicated by the position of this picture among the weeks of the *Tonalamatl*. In addition, the interpreter of the *Telleriano-Remensis* speaks both of the serpent (*culevra*) and of the dragon (*drago*) Quetzalcóatl.

Quetzalcóatl has been viewed, among other things, as a symbol of the storm or wind.³⁰⁾ Seler calls him "the image of the waters,"³¹⁾ and Preuss says that the feathered serpent signifies the earth.³²⁾ But it can also be demonstrated that Quetzalcóatl is identical with Xiuhcoatl, "fire snake."³³⁾ It is interesting that the name of the old fire god,

30) Georges Raynard, "Les trois principales divinités mexicaines: Quetzalcohuatl—Tezcatlipoca—Huitzilopochtli," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, XXIX (1894), p. 193.

31) *Codex Borgia; Eine altmexikanische Bilderschrift der Bibliothek der Congregation de Propaganda Fide; Herausgegeben... Herzog von Loubat... Erlautert von Dr. Eduard Seler*, Vol. II, (3 vols.; Berlin, 1904-9), p. 67.

32) K. Th. Preuss, "Kosmische Heirglyphen der Mexikaner," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, XXXIII (1901), p. 43.

33) H. Beyer, "Der 'Drache' der Mexikaner," *Globus*, XCIII (1908), p. 157. The dragon of the *Codex Borgia* has two feathered plumes on its long bent upper jaw. These two ornaments seem to be a variation of the horn-like ornaments which some Quetzal serpents of the same illuminated manuscript have. It is even more clearly evident on the two dragons of the famous calendar stone. Xiuhcoatl is endowed with the same monstrous head as is shown by *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, page 24, and *Codex Borbonicus*, page 9. With Xiuhcoatl, the lower jaw is shrunken or entirely omitted, and this part is also kept disproportionately small among the representations of Quetzalcóatl. Furthermore Xiuhcoatl, clearly characterized by the horn and fire-flames, often has jaws resembling the Quetzalcóatl of *Codex Borgia*, page 11. Differences may be seen in the comparison of the tails, the end part of Xiuhcoatl consisting usually of a trapezoid-like part from which a ray or point projects outward (the year symbol). Cf. J. E. S. Thompson, "Aquatic Symbols Common to Various Centers of the Classical Period in Meso-America," in *The Civilizations of Ancient America*, Selected

Xiuhtecútlī, means "lord of the turquoise," or "or lord of the year," and despite his association with fire, he had his abode in a land of flowers amidst the water, wrapped in water clouds, and was the lord of the day *Atl*, "water" corresponding to the Maya day *Muluc* which was represented by jade.³⁴)

Thus, Quetzalcóatl is not simply a general god of time, but a symbol of the year. And, in the case of Xiuhcoatl, this identification comes very close indeed. But we may go yet a step farther. The dragon figures of the calendar stone, and the similarly carefully worked out four dragons of the plates of the *Codex Borgia*, are composed of thirteen parts, the head and tail pieces and eleven connecting links—a thirteen-part zodiac with Quetzalcóatl-Xiuhcoatl as the first sign of the zodiac reproduced as the end member, Quetzalcóatl-Xólotl.

Now all this is by way of saying that our dragon has to do with time. The coming of the dragon may be thought of as a sacralizing of time, for it is a kind of re-enacting of the creation of the orderly world. In China, for instance, the dragon dance ushered in not only rain, but also the New Year.³⁵)

In the *Historia de los Mexicanos por sus pinturas*, the first day-count, *ce cipactli*, is set beside the earth itself which was created by it; and the Lord of the day-sign, Tonacatecutli, as the "Lord of Food Supplies," the "Lord of Superabundance, of Wealth," who gives maize and all things to men, is in a sense thought of as one with the earth. He is identified with Xochipilli, "God of Flowers," the male counterpart of the goddess Xochiquetzal. But at the same time this god is supposed to dwell in the uppermost heaven, to send children into the world, and to shine by night as the milky way in the sky. Finally, this god is the *tloque nauaque*, the "Lord of the immediate neighborhood," and the *tlalticpaque*, the "Lord of the surface of the earth," the "Lord

Papers, 29th International Congress of Americanists (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 33. But the monsters of the calendar stone, which are similar to the feathered serpents of *Codex Borgia*, also end in a variation of the Xiuhcoatl tailpoints. Consequently the feathered-serpent, the dragon, and Xiuhcoatl are basically the same; their single components can be interchanged among all three.

34) Thompson, "Aquatic Symbols," p. 33.

35) Cf. Clarence B. Day, *Chinese Peasant Cults* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh Ltd., 1940), pp. 73-4; and Lewis Hodous, *Folkways in China* (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1929), p. 126.

of the middle (or fifth region) of the world," and thus in this regard comes into contact with the fire god.

Tonacatecutli, the lord of the first day-count, is characterized as the primeval god, the creator of all things, and also and more especially as Ometecutli, the "Lord of procreation" who send children into the world from the highest heaven, where he lives. In *Codex Borgia* this first human pair, Oxmoco and Cipactonal, are represented simply as man and woman, but the colored hair and frontal lock of the man enable us to recognize that he is in a measure to be regarded as one with the celestial god, with Tonacatecutli, and his wife with the earth goddess.³⁶⁾

It is certainly difficult to distinguish between terrestrial and celestial snakes and dragons, and one suspects that the people of Mesoamerica themselves were uncertain as to where to draw the line. One of the chief characteristics of Mesoamerican mythology, and one which is exceedingly disconcerting, is what we might call the nomadic tendencies of the gods. Deities pass from the upper to the nether regions at will, refusing to remain in neat categories of terrestrial and/or celestial beings. Furthermore, their shapes are not constant, for the dragons may be crocodiles, snakes, or fishlike beings, or a mingling of these creatures. The *cipactli* monster, for example, as has been noted, was at times regarded as a kind of fish, and the name for the corresponding day in the Quiché calendar meant sword-fish; whereas in Maya art the *imix* monster is generally a draconian crocodile, the exact counterpart of *cipactli*.

Cipactli, then is the earth crocodile, whose gnarled and spiny back forms the crust of the earth. *Cipactli* seems to mean "spiny creature," and the term *cipaque* still survives in parts of Mexico to denote the crocodile. In Aztec codices, the day glyph is usually represented as the head of a crocodile with upper jaw, eye, and snout—the lower jaw often being omitted; sometimes the whole body, replete with spines is shown.³⁷⁾ The Zapotec name for this day also signifies crocodile.³⁸⁾

36) *Codex Vaticanus No. 3773*, pp. 132-33. The relationship between the names *cipactli* and *cipactonal* is immediately striking.

37) H. Beyer, "La aleta de Cipactli," *El México Antiguo*, I (1921), pp. 199-203.

38) E. Seler, "The Mexican Chronology with Special Reference to the Zapotec Calendar," *U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin*, No. 28 (Washington, 1904), p. 38.

According to Aztec belief this great crocodile, whose back was the earth, floated in a large pond. There is evidence in Maya art that the same concept obtained among them.

The day in the Maya calendar corresponding to *Cipactli* is *Imix* (*Imox*, *Imux*, *Ikabal*, *Mox*).³⁹⁾ There are many *imix* glyphs, all of which show the head of a saurian or ophidian monster with a long pendulous nose and usually without a lower jaw, or with a jawbone replacing the lower jaw, and with the *imix* glyph as its headdress, from which vegetation usually sprouts.⁴⁰⁾ Water lily plants or maize vegetation often emerge from its head.⁴¹⁾ Its body occasionally carries celestial symbols, but that is not a serious objection to recognizing it as an aquatic god of the surface of the earth because, as has been noted, denizens of the underworld passed to and from the sky at will.

Finally, the symbols of death which the earth monster usually displays denote its connection with the interior of the earth, the abode of the god of death. The vegetation, particularly maize plants and lilies (which are edible) which sprout from its body bear witness to the fact that it forms the surface of the earth, is the symbol of abundance, and that it floats in a great pond. In the peninsula of Yucatan, small lakes and backwaters are often covered with lily pads, liberally sprinkled with white flowers. Crocodiles love such patches of water where the streams flow sluggishly or there is no current at all.

In summary, *Imix-Cipactli* was the earth monster, the crocodile whose back formed the surface of the earth; the water lily was its symbolic form; abundance was its aspect; and the earth was its domain.

The earth is the mother of universal life. She is the most compelling power in the universe. She is the supreme power. All the other gods and things seem to form part of her or to have proceeded from her depths. She is goddess of the wilderness and mistress of the forest.

39) Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, p. 70. Cf. Fig. 6, Nos. 1-17.

40) The symbolic form is usually favored in representations of the *imix* glyph, but there is one personified form of the day sign at Piedras Negras (Cf. Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, Fig. 6, No. 8), and another on Tzendales I, although only a drawing of this exists (*Ibid.*, Fig. 40, Nos. 1-4; p. 278; Fig. 12, Nos. 1, 2, 4). Cf. Beyer, "La Aleta de Cipactli."

41) Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, Fig. 12, Nos. 1, 4, 8; Tablets of the Cross and Foliated Cross, Palenque. Cf. A. P. Maudslay, *Archaeology*, Vol. IV (5 vols.; London: R. H. Porter and Dulau & Co., 1889-1902), Pl. XCIII.

Her wrath is easily roused, and she bestows her gifts only when she is pleased.

She brings forth and fosters all creatures, but is simultaneously their common grave. She relentlessly swallows back, as a monster, the beings that she produces. All that live on her surface come from her interior and return there. She is all-producing, all-maintaining, all-devouring.

It is surely not chance that the first day of the calendrical series of both the Maya and Aztec belongs to the provident, bountiful, yet devouring earth, the object of the love of all the people, be they of the mountains or the plains, the uplands or the forest.

THE DOG

In the myths from Central America, there is a concept of multiple creations, a series of four previous ages or "Suns" which were made before the creation of the present "Fifth Sun." Each creation was followed by a cataclysm that destroyed mankind together with the sun which gave light to the creation. But it is primarily the myth of the creation of the "Fifth Sun" which contains the basis of Nahuatl religion.

When the last of the previously created worlds was destroyed, the sun was also lost in the catastrophe, and there was nothing left to light the world. Then all the gods assembled in Teotihuacán and decided that one of them should be sacrificed to become the Fifth Sun.

Two gods volunteered for the sacrifice. Tecciztecatl, rich and powerful, prepared himself by making an offering of feathers, gold, balls of copal, and spines made of precious coral. Nanautzin,⁴²) the other god, who was covered with scabs and sores, could offer only balls of hay, green canes, and maguey spines dyed in the blood of his own sacrifice, together with the scabs of his sores in place of copal.

For four consecutive days the two gods fasted and sacrificed. On the fifth day, all the deities assembled in two rows, at the end of which was placed the sacred brazier in which a great fire burned. Into this flame the chosen god was to throw himself in order to emerge purified, lighting the world with his brilliance.

The two gods prepared themselves for the sacrifice. It fell to the lot of Tecciztecatl, the rich god, to be sacrificed first, since he was the

⁴²) Also called Nanáhuatl ("the one covered with sores").

more powerful. Four times he ran forward, only to stop at the end of the great fire each time, afraid of the great heat, not daring to take the final leap.

Then, Nanautzin, the scabby god, tried his valor. Closing his eyes, he jumped into the middle of the divine fire, which sent forth a great tongue of flame. When Tecciztecatl saw this, shamed by his cowardice, he hurled himself into the fire, and he, too, was consumed.

But the sun, after it was created, did not move. It hung motionless on the horizon and did not start on its journey. When the other gods asked the reason, the sun demanded that the other gods, the stars, also be offered in sacrifice. One of them, the planet Venus, shot an arrow at the sun, but the arrow was turned back against her and shot her dead; and one by one the other gods also died. The twin brother of Venus, Xólotl, who had the form of a dog, was the last to die. Finally Quetzalcóatl, the god of wind and life, began to blow with a strong blast to make it move.

The myth continues by recounting how Quetzalcóatl in the form of Xólotl descends to the underworld to obtain from Mictlantecutli, the lord of the dead, the bones of man from previous creations in order to make him anew for this the Fifth Sun. By trickery Quetzalcóatl-Xólotl manages to secure some bones, brings them back to his home, bleeds his penis upon them, and thus creates man to inhabit the world.

In the two aspects of the creation myth I have mentioned, namely those of the creation of the world and of the sun, the name of Quetzalcóatl is common to both. The name Quetzalcóatl means literally "quetzal-serpent" or "the plumed serpent." But since the hard to obtain, brilliant feathers of the quetzal bird were a symbol of something precious, and *cóatl* also means "twin brother," Quetzal-cóatl may also be translated as "the precious twin." This indicates that the morning and evening star are one and the same: the planet Venus, represented in the morning by Quetzalcóatl and in the evening by his twin brother, Xólotl. Therefore Quetzalcóatl as Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli (the "lord of the house of dawn," "Venus, the morning star") appears with two faces: one of a living man, the other in the form of a skull.⁴³⁾

43) Alfonso Caso, *The Aztecs: People of the Sun* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 24. Cf. *Codex Magliabecchiano XIII, 3. Manuscrit mexicain postcolombien de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Florence reproduit en photochromographie aux frais de Duc de Loubat correspondant de l'institut* (Rome,

Venus appears for some time as an evening star. Then disappearing it reappears as a morning star. This is paralleled by the myth in which Quetzalcóatl and his twin brother Xólotl descended to the world of the dead (Mictlan) and, wandering in the underworld, underwent various trials imposed by the gods.⁴⁴⁾ Hence Xólotl is closely connected with the underworld and the dead.

Xólotl's connection with the underworld is further emphasized by the symbols of death with which he is sometimes decked. As lord of a week (1 *Cozcaquauhtli*), he is shown in the *Codex Borbonicus* with a knife in his mouth, a symbol of death; and he has black wavy hair which is similar to that worn by the gods of death. The jade figure of Stuttgart portrays him with a skull and with his ribs showing.⁴⁵⁾ Hence it is not difficult to see the relationship between the dog and the realm of the dead.

When the ancient inhabitants of *Anahuac* buried a corpse,⁴⁶⁾ they often killed a dog and laid it beside the dead body. The sacrificed dog conducted the deceased to Mictlan. He was of particular aid in assisting his master to cross a wide stretch of water called Chicunauhapan, the "ninefold stream" that flows around the final abode of the dead.⁴⁷⁾ The same belief existed among the Maya, for the Lacandon place at each corner of a grave small dogs made of palm leaves, and these are

1904), Folios 29 and 93. Xólotl almost always wears the ornaments and paint of Quetzalcóatl. We have noted that the first day-sign, *cipactli* ("crocodile," "earth monster"), is connected with ideas like beginning, creation, birth, and is ascribed to the East, the region where the sun rises. In the same way, *itzcuintli* ("dog") is dedicated to the West.

44) *Leyendas de los Soles*, trans. by Angel Maria Garibay, in his *Historia de la literatura nahuatl* (2 vols.; Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1953-54), pp. 295-6. The emphasis placed upon one or the other of the Quetzalcóatl-Xólotl duality varies from myth to myth. Cf. Laurette Séjourné, *Burning Water; Thought and Religion in Ancient Mexico*, trans. by Irene Nicholson (New York: The Vanguard Press, n.d.), pp. 141ff., Fig. 55.

45) Cf. Eduard Seler, "Das Grünsteinidol des Stuttgarter Museums," in *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, Vol. III, Pt. 3, No. 2, pp. 392-409.

46) The Nahuatl term *anahuac* means "by the water," and referred both to the Aztec's own conquered territory and also to the Totonac country on the Gulf of Mexico.

47) Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, ed. by Angel Maria Garibay K. (4 vols.; Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1956), Vol. IV, Appendix III, No. 1, pp. 307-08.

thought to accompany the soul to its final resting place; ⁴⁸⁾ and remains of dogs were found in several tombs at Kaminaljuyú. ⁴⁹⁾ Skeletons of such dogs have been found as offerings for the dead at Tlatilco in the Valley of Mexico; and it is a curious fact that an edible dog of the same species and appearance occurs in China. In the 16th century Sahagún described these dogs as *tlalchichi*, "dog of the country," "totally without hair, from the villages of Teotlixco and Ixtlan, short and round, delicious to eat..." ⁵⁰⁾ The clay dogs made as funerary offerings are modeled with extraordinary realism. They are shown standing, seated on their hind legs, curled asleep, rolling on their backs, with bones in their mouths, barking, etc. There is a dog wearing a human mask, one with holes in its ears, and another with two heads. ⁵¹⁾ Best known among the clay sculptures of Colima are the life-size hollow effigies of dogs of polished red or black clay. ⁵²⁾ More direct evidence for this belief is supplied by the Tzeltal of Tenejapa who say that one should treat dogs well because they lead the souls of the dead to the underworld, ⁵³⁾ and the people of Chenalhó who believe dogs help their masters to cross the river of the land of the dead. ⁵⁴⁾ The same belief exists among the present-day Aztecs in Tecospa. ⁵⁵⁾ A small

48) A. M. Tozzer, *A Comparative Study of the Mayas and the Lacandones* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), p. 47.

49) A. V. Kidder, J. D. Jennings, and E. M. Shook, *Excavations at Kaminaljuyú, Guatemala*, Carnegie Institution of Washington Publication No. 561 (Washington, 1946), p. 155.

50) Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Bk. 11, ch. 6.

51) Miguel Covarrubias, *Indian Art of Mexico and Central America* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1957), p. 93. Cf. in particular Pl. XXIV. See also the dog of yellow clay overpainted with red, and polished, 42 cm. high, from Nayarit, in Paul Rivet, *Alt-Mexiko* (Munich: Hanns Reich Verlag, 1954), Pl. LXXII.

52) Isabel Kelly, "The Archaeology of the Atlán-Tuxcacuexco Area of Jalisco," *Ibero Americana*, XXVI-XXVII, 1, 2 (1945-49), has established three successive periods for the Jalisco-Colima area. The earliest has the large hollow dogs and figures. Although the presence of "thin orange" indicates a period belonging to at least Teotihuacan II, the tradition of dogs and other animal effigy-vessels of red polished clay is characteristic of the Zacatenco-Ticomán horizon, and Covarrubias suggests this level is older than indicated by Kelly.

53) F. C. Barbachano, *Monografía sobre los Tzeltales de Tenejapa, Chiapas, Mexico*, Microfilm Collection of Manuscripts on Middle American Cultural Anthropology, No. 5 (Chicago, 1946), p. 124.

54) C. Guiteras Holmes, *Informe de San Pedro Chenalhó, Chiapas*, loc. cit., No. 14, p. 306.

55) William Madsen, *The Virgin's Children; Life in an Aztec-Village Today* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960), p. 213.

artificial blue dog, the *xolocozacatl* was a part of the ceremonial dress which the effigy of the dead warrior wore.⁵⁶⁾ Further, Mictlantecutli, the "lord of the realm of the dead," appears as patron of the day-sign *itscuintli*, "dog." The glyph for the dog in the Maya codices is a symbol which has been generally accepted as representing the animal's ribs, combined with a death sign.⁵⁷⁾ Occasionally, pictures of dogs show the ribs, and frequently the symbol of darkness is placed above the eye. This probably indicates a connection with the underworld.

Seler sees Xólotl as the canine god who conducts the sun each evening to the underworld. There is strong support for this idea in the fact that Xólotl shares with Tlalchitonatiuh the patronage of the week 1 *Cozcaquauhtli* in *Codex Borbonicus* and *Telleriano-Remensis*, and in the *Aubin Tonalamatl*. Tlalchitonatiuh is the dawn manifestation of the sun.⁵⁸⁾ Further confirmation of this hypothesis is supplied by the Stuttgart jade previously mentioned. This skeletal form of Xólotl bears on its back a large sun disk, clearly symbolic of Xólotl's guidance of the sun to the underworld.⁵⁹⁾

The interpreter of the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* (folio 20) says that the sun goes to shine to the dead. The disk of dark feathers is also found on Xólotl on page 76 of the *Codex Nuttall* and doubtless represents the night sun, the sun of the underworld.⁶⁰⁾

The dog is often depicted in the Maya codices carrying a torch, perhaps a reference to the Maya tradition that the dog brought fire to mankind,⁶¹⁾ and the head of a dog is sometimes part of the compound glyph which represents the fire-drill. This points up again the relation-

56) *Codex Magliabecchiano*, Folio 72.

57) Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, p. 78.

58) J. E. S. Thompson, "Representations of Tlalchitonatiuh at Chichen Itza, Yucatan, and at El Baul, Escuintla," *Notes on Middle American Archaeology and Ethnology*, No. 19 (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, Division of Historical Research, 1943).

59) Chantico, the Fire Goddess of Xochimilco, is the "sun in the underworld." Of her it is expressly stated that she was transformed into a dog, and one of her names was Quaxolotl. Hence Xólotl is not only the guide or carrier of the sun, but also, in his form of Nanautzin, the sun itself. Cf. *Codex Borgia*, Vol. II, p. 97.

60) *Codex Nuttall* (Zouche); *Ancient Mexican Codex Belonging to Lord Zouche of Haryworth*, Introduction by Zelia Nuttall (Cambridge: Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, 1902).

61) J. E. S. Thompson, *Ethnology of the Mayas of Southern and Central British Honduras*, Field Museum of Natural History, Publication 274, Anthropological Series, XVII, No. 2 (Chicago, 1930), p. 151.

ship between the sun and movement, for *Nauī ollin*, "four movement," is often used as a hieroglyphic of the sun. The word *ollin* indicates the movement of the fire-drill. ⁶²⁾

Xólotl is sometimes represented as an entire dog, but more generally with a dog's head. ⁶³⁾ In Maya inscriptions the head of what is probably a dog, usually decorated with a pair of crossed bones, is sometimes used as a day sign, and there is evidence for identifying this sign as the "night sun." The crossed bones doubtless refer to the dog's connection with the underworld. ⁶⁴⁾ This glyph is very strong evidence for a Maya association of the dog with the sun at night when it descended to the underworld to emerge next sunrise in the east.

At this point, attention should also be called to the close relationship between Xólotl and Nanautzin, the scabby god. The one can often be substituted for the other in the series of days and weeks, and the two are confused in mythology. Indeed, Nanautzin may be considered a variant of Xólotl. ⁶⁵⁾ It is interesting in this connection that one of the characteristics of the dog in Mexican art is that his ears are eaten away, or that blood (pus?) pours from them. The dog is often portrayed in Maya art with ragged ears. Xólotl is usually portrayed with the same sore ears, and in *Féjerváry-Mayer*, page 39, an ear with a jagged edge generally replaces the complete head of the dog as the glyph for the day *Itzcuintli*. The ear similarly replaces the complete head of the dog in the symbolic form of the glyph for *Oc* in Maya codices. A constant feature is the presence at the base of the ear of two black spots. Thompson suggests that these either symbolize syphilitic sores, ⁶⁶⁾ or are perhaps examples of chiclero's ulcer (Leishmoniasis), a disease apparently transmitted by a fly, perhaps a parasite of the curassow, which is found only in the central American rain forest. ⁶⁷⁾

62) On the Mexican plateau, also, the dog symbolized fire. Cf. Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Bk. IV, ch. 25.

63) *Codex Vaticanus No. 3773*, Folios 29, 93.

64) Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, p. 79.

65) There is another myth concerning the creation of Huitzilopochtli as the sun from the earth goddess Coatlicue. This myth duplicates that of the birth of the Fifth Sun in Teotihuacan, with the difference that Xólotl-Nanautzin's ulcerous body is here represented by the earth mother, and the sun rising to heaven (the soul of the penitent) by Huitzilopochtli. Cf. Séjourné, *Burning Water*, p. 159.

66) Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, p. 79.

67) J. E. S. Thompson, "Notes on a Plumbate Vessel with Shell Inlay and on Chiclero's Ulcer," *Essays in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology*, ed. by Samuel

Förstemann notes that the sign for "end" closely resembles the signs of the Maya day *Oc*.⁶⁸) In both cases the ears of the dog are rendered prominent. A similar head with another suffix was the hieroglyph of the Maya month *Xul*, and *xul* likewise means "end." This hieroglyph then, became connected with ideas like end, death, and underworld.

In the Maya calendar, the tenth day (*Oc*, *Tzi*, *Elab*, *Elac*, *Chi*) has the meaning of dog (*tzi*) in several highland lists, and the glyph itself is the head of an animal which may well be that of a dog, the equivalent of Nahuatl *itzcuintli*.⁶⁹) *Oc* may well be connected with the root of *ocol*, "to enter." Since this word is used to describe sunset, when the sun entered the earth, a connection exists with the dog of the underworld who was closely connected with the sun during its nocturnal passage through the nether regions. The survival of *oc* as a name for the dog in Palencano Chol corresponds with *tzi* of the highlands.⁷⁰)

The tenth day, therefore, was under the patronage of the Maya equivalent of Xólotl. He appears to have led the sun across the underworld each night from west to east. In some ways he actually represented the sun also, since his apparent glyph is used sometimes in Maya texts to show counts of days which had some special connection with the night (e.g. correlations with lunar cycles).

Finally in the Aztec myth of the creation of the suns, there is a facet which is not found among the Maya: namely, the idea that this Fifth Sun, which currently gives us light, was also to be destroyed like the others, its end being brought about by earthquakes on a day called 4 Earthquake. This catastrophe was expected on the last day of an Aztec century, the cycle of fifty-two years which we have noted. On this day, at nightfall, all the fires in the city were extinguished, and the priests led the people in solemn procession to a hill near Ixtapalapa. There they waited until midnight, and if the star they were watching

K. Lothrop, et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 120. Thompson suggests that this is evidence that Xólotl originated in the tropical lowlands.

68) E. Förstemann, "Die Mayahieroglyphen," *Globus*, LXVI (1894), p. 78.

69) Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, p. 78. The widespread word for dog in the Americas is to be noted. Cf. Nahuatl *chichi*, Yana *cucu*, Takelma *t'sixi* (*t'sisi*), Lenca *xuxu*, etc. *Ibid.*, p. 109. E. Sapir, *Time Perspective in Aboriginal American Culture, A Study in Method*, Canada Department of Mines, Geological Survey, Memoir 90, Anthropological Series No. 13 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1916), p. 70.

70) Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, p. 79.

(probably Aldebaran or the Pleiades) passed in its course over what they considered the middle of the sky, it meant that the world would not come to an end and that the sun would rise the following day to renew its struggles with the powers of night. But if Aldebaran, called *Yohual-tecuhtli*, had not followed its course, then the stars and the planets, the *Tzitzimime*,⁷¹⁾ changed into fearful beasts, must return to earth and devour man before the earthquakes destroyed the sun.⁷²⁾

According to Brinton⁷³⁾ the Pleiades had the same name in Mayan as the rattles of the rattlesnake, *tzab*. The Pleiades (Nahuatl, *Ytianquiztle*) are the most conspicuous star cluster of the constellation of "the dog" (our Taurus), forming the eye of that animal's head and are well fitted to denote the whole group which stands for the tail of the year serpent Xiuhcoatl and of Quetzalcóatl. The tail of Xiuhcoatl, which may well be a conventionalized form of the outlines of the constellation, was used as a symbolic ornament of Xólotl, and may also be compared with the conventional sign for "year."⁷⁴⁾

At the end of a cycle the Aztecs watched *Ytianquiztle*. When the constellation passed the zenith, the beginning of a new cycle was celebrated, for the world was once again a new creation.⁷⁵⁾

Thus in ancient Mexico, the dog becomes a symbol, joining together within itself elements including: the god Xólotl as twin of Quetzalcóatl and god of monsters; the stars (*Tzitzimime*), the sun, and fearful beasts; the underworld, death, and the "end"; and trial, penitence, sacrifice, and renewal.

SUMMARY

Working where possible from the known to the unknown, I have attempted to discuss two symbols that relate to time in Nahuatl religion:

71) Note the compounding of the word *tzi*, "dog."

72) Caso, *The Aztecs*, p. 18.

73) D. G. Brinton, *A Primer of Mayan Hieroglyphics*, University of Pennsylvania Series in Philology, Literature, and Archaeology, Vol. III, No. 2 (Philadelphia, 1895), p. 58. The Pleiades may have been of significance because their celestial position related them to a particular astronomical phenomenon, the first yearly passage of the sun at the zenith. Cf. James W. Dow, "Astronomical Orientations at Teotihuacán, A Case Study in Astro-Archaeology." *American Antiquity*, XXXII, No. 3 (1967), p. 309.

74) Cf. the dog signs in connection with "end" and "year" in the New Fire ceremonies in *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*. Cf. Beyer, "Drache der Mexikaner," p. 158.

75) *Codex Borgia*, Folio 27; *Codex Vaticanus* 3773, Folio 69.

the “dragon” and the dog. In so doing it was possible, indeed necessary, to point out a series of interlocking complexes which comprise both representations. I have tried to show that the “dragon” or earth monster as a symbol goes far beyond its more obvious association with the surface of the earth, and is in fact connected with many other related kinds of symbols—in particular those having to do with such ideas as beginning, creation, the East, and (as the serpents *Quetzalcóatl* and *Xiuhcoatl*) with both time and the cosmos. Similarly, in the case of the dog, the series of complexes included such things as the underworld, the night sun, fire and movement, the Pleiades, and the West. I have suggested that the *Quetzalcóatl*/*Xiuhcoatl* serpents are connected with both the solar year and the sacred calendar round of 260 days, and that the figure of *Quetzalcóatl*/*Xólotl* indicates yet a further connection with the cycles involving the planet Venus.

We have thus explored, albeit in somewhat brief compass, two ways in which the sense of time has manifested itself in Nahuatl culture: the structure of that meaning, and the response to it.

I MITI COSMOGONICI DEGLI YEZIDI *

DI

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II. IL COLLABORATORE-AVVERSARIO DI DIO: ASPETTI DEMIURGICO-TRIKSTERICI DELL'ANGELO YEZIDICO

Riprendendo l'esame del mito di creazione quale è riferito nel *Libro nero*, diremo che un altro motivo di rilevanza storico-religiosa notevole presente in esso è costituito dalla figura del collaboratore di Dio, l'angelo Gibrā'il, che assume una chiara connotazione demiurgica, sia pure in posizione subordinata e in perfetta uniformità alla volontà divina ¹⁾. Questo personaggio, come lo stesso Melek Tā'ūs del quale egli spesso assume funzioni e prerogative, è rappresentato in figura di uccello, secondo una concezione molto diffusa nel folklore europeo ed asiatico ²⁾ e largamente attestata in ambiente etnologico, cui è parimenti familiare la nozione di un „secondo”, collaboratore o avversario di Dio nel momento delle origini ³⁾. Nella tradizione yezidica del *Libro nero* Gibrā'il con la sua attività demiurgica non si pone in atteggiamento di contrasto rispetto alla somma divinità, atteggiamento che invece assumerà in altre versioni del mito cosmogonico. Qui è piuttosto Melek

* Cfr. la Parte I in "Numen" XXI, 3 (1974), p. 197 sgg.

1) Per ordine divino Gibrā'il dà forma quadrata alla terra e prende in consegna due parti della Perla su cui Dio fisserà sole e luna.

2) Si vedano i paralleli più oltre citati. Sulla rappresentazione di Dio in forma d'aquila o di falco presso le culture turche d'Asia ovvero sul ruolo mitico di questi animali nell'antico Iran cfr. J.-P. Roux, *Les Fidèles de Vérité et les croyances religieuses des Turcs* in „R.H.R.", CLXXVI, 1, 1969, p. 78 sgg. L'orinotomorfismo dell'anima, corispondente ad una nozione diversa da quella qui in esame, sarebbe parimenti un'immagine tipica della cultura turca (Roux, *art. cit.*, p. 90 sg.); essa ricorre peraltro frequentemente nella tradizione irano-islamica (cfr. Bausani, *Persia religiosa*, pp. 340-343). Sulla presenza di concezioni siffatte in ambiente ahl-i haqq, dove l'immagine di Dio-Aquila reale assume una connotazione mistica in relazione alle speculazioni sulle successive incarnazioni divine, cfr. Mokri, *Le Chasseur de Dieu*, pp. 23-43.

3) Per la tipologia del personaggio „secondo”, collaboratore o avversario di Dio nella creazione, il quale assume spesso connotazioni triksteriche, cfr. J. Henninger, *L'adversaire du dieu bon chez les primitives in Satan* (Études carmélitaines, 27), Paris 1948, tr. it. Milano 1954, pp. 55-70; U. Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso. Saggio storico ed etnologico*, Roma 1958.

Tā'ūs che assolve un ruolo analogo a quello del trickster di alcuni racconti etnologici, intervenendo a modificare lo *status* originario fondato dal Creatore.

Si narra infatti che, quando Dio ebbe plasmato Adamo con i quattro elementi portati da Gibrā'il, lo fece entrare nel Paradiso vietandogli di mangiare il frumento. Trascorso un lungo periodo, interviene Melek Tā'ūs, lamentando che Adamo non abbia una discendenza ⁴⁾. Ricevuto il permesso da parte di Dio („la cosa e la sua esecuzione consegno nelle tue mani”), l'Angelo Pavone invita Adamo a cibarsi del frumento, assicurando che poi starà meglio. „Subito dopo che egli ebbe mangiato, gli si gonfiò il ventre e il Pavone Angelo lo fece uscire dal giardino, lo abbandonò e salì in cielo” ⁵⁾.

Il personaggio cui è attribuita l'iniziativa che determinerà la cacciata di Adamo dal Paradiso e la perdita della condizione di beatitudine, risulta inoltre connesso con l'origine di quelle funzioni biologiche che, assenti in una prima fase della sua esistenza caratterizzata da stabilità ed egualità, sono oggi inerenti alla natura dell'uomo in quanto essere mutevole, sottoposto alla passione e al divenire ⁶⁾. Emerge nettamente a questo proposito la grande affinità tipologica fra il Melek Tā'ūs yezidico e quelle figure di collaboratori-avversari che ricorrono in molti miti primitivi, i quali parimenti sono spesso presentati come modificatori della „creazione di base” operata dall'Essere supremo e messi in rapporto con l'origine delle funzioni biologiche dell'uomo. In un mito californiano degli Shoshoni del Wind-River il Coyote, tipico trickster della mitologia nord-americana, dà all'uomo la bocca affinché possa nutrirsi ⁷⁾; in un mito dei Maidu nord-orientali, in cui la connotazione dualistica del Coyote è molto forte, si attribuisce ad esso l'istituzione delle norme che regolano la generazione dei figli ed egualmente la modificazione delle condizioni di vita stabilite dal Creatore per l'uomo, il quale non avrebbe dovuto morire ⁸⁾.

4) Furlani, *op. cit.*, p. 85, 18: „Dopo cento anni il Pavone Angelo disse a Dio: 'Come avverrà che Adamo aumenterà e dove è la sua discendenza?' ”.

5) Segue l'episodio, presente anche nella versione mitica riferita dal Dirr, della sofferenza di Adamo cui, da parte di un uccello, viene praticato un canale per l'evacuazione. In tal modo l'uomo viene costituito come essere dotato di attività fisiologiche.

6) Vedi oltre quanto si dirà a proposito della notizia del Dirr.

7) Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso*, p. 98 sg.

8) Bianchi, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-78. Per la qualità di Coyote come fondatore delle istituzioni connesse con la sfera biologica dell'uomo cfr. *ibid.*, p. 98.

E' stato opportunamente notato che il regime stabilito alle origini dall'Essere supremo, e al quale con protervia ostinata e con successo Coyote si oppone, „è talora caratterizzato da una tal quale 'egualità' o indeterminatezza culturale" ⁹⁾. Questa definizione ben si adatta al quadro presentato dal racconto yezidico, soprattutto in una versione, riferita dal Dirr, la quale insiste a lungo sulla situazione statica e in definitiva monotona dell'uomo nella sua originaria dimora paradisiaca. Si tratta di una tradizione yezidica relativa alle origini, nella quale il momento cosmogonico ha scarso rilievo, essendo sottolineata l'onnipotenza di Dio creatore, da cui sono stati fatti il cielo, la terra, gli animali, gli uomini e le creature angeliche, queste ultime di sostanza spirituale e luminosa mentre gli altri esseri viventi sono formati dai quattro elementi ¹⁰⁾. L'impostazione è dunque monoteistica, di tipo biblico e coranico, mentre sono assenti, insieme con ogni intervento di altri personaggi in funzione di collaboratori o avversari di Dio, anche quegli elementi di sapore folklorico che appaiono numerosi in altre versioni del mito di creazione. Si descrive poi la situazione di Adamo nel Paradiso, dove egli „godeva di tutti i doni e non aveva nessun affanno nè preoccupazione"; il primo uomo gustava tutti i frutti del Paradiso ed espelleva i residui del cibo sotto forma di sudore. Il narratore sottolinea per un verso la condizione privilegiata di Adamo („egli non conosceva affatto la passione che contamina l'uomo") ma per l'altro fa notare che l'uniformità e staticità di tale situazione, soprattutto per l'assenza di compagnia per l'uomo, risultava in definitiva un fatto alquanto negativo ¹¹⁾. Per l'intervento di Melek Tâ'ûs viene allora formata Eva da una costola tratta dal fianco sinistro di Adamo.

Appare qui il personaggio del Pavone, la cui funzione demiurgica è presentata come rimedio alla solitudine del primo uomo; essa inoltre risulta esercitata in nome e per volontà di Dio ¹²⁾. La mancanza

9) Bianchi, *op. cit.*, p. 83 sg. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 53 a proposito del mito yezidico.

10) Dirr, *Einiges über die Jeziden*, cit., p. 564 sgg. L'autore si fonda essenzialmente sulle notizie date nel volume XIII, 2 della „Zapiski der kaukasischen Abteilung der keiserlich russischen geographischen Gesellschaft" dal Jegiasarow (*Kurze ethnographisch-juristische Skizze über die Jeziden des Eriwaner Gouvernements*, pp. 171-220) e dal Kartsew (*Bemerkungen über die türkischen Jeziden*), entrambi in possesso di informazioni dirette.

11) „Con Adamo vivevano nel Paradiso *huri* ed angeli; ma egli non intratteneva alcun rapporto con loro, poichè gli angeli erano stati creati dallo spirito e lui dalla terra. Perciò la cosa era per lui molto noiosa" (*ib.*).

12) „Allora venne a lui una volta *Tâ'ûs Melek* e gli chiese se era contento

(ovvero la eliminazione¹³) di esplicite connotazioni negative nella figura e nell'azione di Melek Tā'ūs nella versione mitica riferita dal Dirr è ulteriormente confermata dallo sviluppo della vicenda, che si conclude con l'espulsione della prima coppia umana dal Paradiso. Tale espulsione, piuttosto che frutto di una colpa degli uomini determinata dalla sollecitazione di un personaggio maligno, è presentata come conseguenza di un preciso disegno divino. Si narra infatti che Dio, rivolgendosi a Melek Tā'ūs „che sempre stava accanto al suo trono alla testa degli angeli”¹⁴), gli disse: „Io ho creato la terra per popolarla ed essa è fino ad ora vuota; conduci Adamo ed Eva fuori dal Paradiso!”. Dopo un tentativo da parte di Melek Tā'ūs di sottrarsi al comando di Dio, considerato come un perturbamento dell'ordine già stabilito da Dio stesso¹⁵), l'angelo discende nel Paradiso e induce la prima coppia umana a gustare dell'uva ovvero, secondo un'altra tradizione, del frumento.

La notizia riferita dal Dirr, secondo la quale l'iniziativa di Dio determina l'espulsione dei protoplasti dal Paradiso, rappresenta una eccezione nelle testimonianze relative allo yezidismo, che di solito, conformemente alla tradizione biblica e coranica, vede in quell'episodio la diretta conseguenza di una colpa, per l'infrazione di un divieto divino. La fonte del Dirr, del resto, attesta anche la più comune dottrina relativa all'allontanamento di Adamo ed Eva dal Paradiso dichiarando che essa ricorre in altre versioni del racconto yezidico¹⁶). Questo procede illustrando lo svolgimento e la conclusione della vicenda, quali sono nar-

della sua situazione e se era felice. Adamo rispose che era soddisfatto di tutto ma gli mancava un compagno. *Ṭāūs Melek* disse: 'Leva in alto il braccio sinistro'; Adama ubbidì e *Ṭāūs Melek* gli tolse una costola e disse: 'Per la grazia e la volontà di Dio sarà fatto da te un compagno'. Così fu creata Eva" (*ib.*).

13) Il confronto con le altre versioni, in cui la caduta di Adamo ed Eva è presentata come una colpa determinata dall'iniziativa dell'Angelo Pavone, rende legittima l'ipotesi che il narratore di questo mito abbia complicato la prospettiva, introducendo il motivo dell'ordine divino per eliminare gli aspetti più chiaramente negativi nella figura di Melek Tā'ūs.

14) Dirr, *art. cit.*, p. 565. In questo breve inciso traspare la nozione yezidica, ampiamente sviluppata nelle altre fonti, della preminenza dell'Angelo Pavone come capo della gerarchia angelica e la sua qualità di interlocutore diretto di Dio.

15) *Ṭāūs Melek* rispose: 'Eterno Signore, la tua volontà è santa! Ma come io devo condurli fuori dal Paradiso e infrangere l'ordine creato da te?'" (Dirr, *art. cit.*, p. 565).

16) Dirr, *art. cit.*, p. 565 nota 1, con riferimento alle informazioni dello Jegiasarow.

rate, con qualche lieve variante, in tutte le altre testimonianze. A causa dell'ingestione dell'uva si rende necessario un canale per l'evacuazione; esso è prodotto da Melek Tā'ūs che in pari tempo rende i primi uomini atti alla generazione. Dopo di ciò, ritenuti ormai impuri, i due sono fatti uscire dal Paradiso ¹⁷).

La tradizione mitica esaminata non presenta una esplicita tensione, a livello cosmogonico o antropogonico, fra i personaggi sovrumani in azione. Sembra anzi — come si è detto — che la fonte yezidica abbia volutamente eliminato ogni elemento che potesse incrinare la nozione della onnipotenza divina, attribuendo a Dio stesso la decisione di far uscire Adamo ed Eva dalla dimora paradisiaca. Tuttavia si noterà che l'espulsione dei protoplasti dal paradiso è considerata una premessa necessaria all'acquisizione delle attività fisiologiche (nutrizione e generazione) che sono costitutive dell'umanità attuale; essa inoltre realizza uno *status* sentito come opposto e contraddittorio rispetto al primitivo ordine fondato da Dio, mentre il compito di attuare il disegno divino è affidato ad un secondo personaggio, il quale risulta in tal modo connesso con la sfera delle funzioni fisiologiche. Tali funzioni, da lui messe in moto per la prima volta, pongono fine allo stato di indeterminatezza e staticità biologica dell'uomo e segnano in pari tempo l'inizio di una condizione che conosce affanni e dolori. Si aggiunga inoltre che allo stesso tema della plasmazione di Eva, compiuta dall'Angelo per remediare ad un inconveniente (la solitudine di Adamo) della creazione operata da Dio, soggiace una motivazione di tipo dualistico, poichè di fatto esso rivela quella „insufficienza” o incompletezza dell'azione del Creatore in cui è da vedere la più profonda ed autentica radice della qualità dualistica dei racconti yezidici e di analoghe narrazioni di ambiente culto o etnologico.

Anche nella versione mitica del *Libro nero*, del resto, l'Angelo Pavone non opera in opposizione alla volontà di Dio, una volta che la sua azione riceve il consenso di quello; tuttavia per essa viene infranto un divieto divino e, soprattutto, risulta fondato un regime di vita che contraddice la condizione originariamente stabilita dal Creatore ¹⁸). Si sco-

17) Dirr, *loc. cit.* L'autore riferisce anche un'altra variante, secondo la quale le funzioni qui assolve da Melek Tā'ūs sono compiute da un altro angelo. Questa alternanza di personaggi angelici riappare anche nelle altre fonti.

18) Nella tradizione relativa alla creazione dell'uomo attestata dal Siouffi la vicenda si svolge in modo diverso: Adamo, per sua personale iniziativa, infrange

prono pertanto nel racconto yezidico i tratti essenziali di quei miti etnologici in cui l'attività contraddittoria ed ineliminabile di un collaboratore-avversario dell'Essere supremo presenta una più o meno netta qualificazione dualistica. Tale connotazione dualistica appare ancora con sufficiente chiarezza in quelle versioni del mito yezidico che descrivono l'originario contrasto fra Dio e un secondo personaggio, che in una variante è lo stesso Melek Tā'ūs¹⁹⁾ mentre in un'altra è piuttosto l'angelo Gabriele²⁰⁾.

Secondo la versione cosmogonica riferita dal Siouffi, al principio c'era un oceano sconfinato al cui centro si levava „un albero creato dalla potenza divina. Dio stava su quest'albero in forma di uccello”²¹⁾. Lontano dall'albero c'era un rosaio fiorito dove risiedeva Sheikh Sinn, creato dalla stessa essenza divina, anch'esso in forma di uccello²²⁾. Dal suo splendore Dio formò quindi Gibrā'ī, parimenti in figura di uccello e, dopo averlo fatto risiedere sull'albero accanto a sè, gli pose

il divieto impostogli da Dio e quindi, espulso dal Paradiso, vede formarsi nel suo corpo gli organi necessari alle attività fisiologiche (*art. cit.*, p. 256 sg.). Cfr. Guérinot, *art. cit.*, p. 600 dove peraltro si dice solo che Adamo, in conseguenza della colpa, è colpito „da ogni sorta di indisposizioni e malattie”.

19) Si tratta della versione cosmogonica raccolta dal Lescot (*op. cit.*, p. 57 sg.) la quale, salvo la presenza dell'Angelo Pavone in funzione di contraddittore di Dio, è sostanzialmente eguale all'altra, in cui il personaggio in azione è Gibrā'ī. Cfr. Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

20) Tale variante del mito d'origine è riferita dal Siouffi (*art. cit.*, p. 252 sgg.) e del Guérinot (*art. cit.*, p. 595 sg.). Nella esposizione seguiremo la notizia del Siouffi.

21) *Art. cit.*, p. 252; cfr. Guérinot, *art. cit.*, p. 595. Secondo la notizia del Lescot l'albero su cui risiede Dio in figura d'uccello affonda le sue radici nella profondità della terra che sta sotto il mare. L'immagine di un uccello (propriamente un'aquila) residente sull'albero cosmico apparterebbe al „sostrato folklorico indo-europeo” (Roux, *art. cit.*, p. 78, dove si rimanda a Funk-Wagnalls, *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, voll. I-II, New York 1949-50, pp. 441-442). Sui temi mitici dell'albero cosmico e dell'uccello si veda anche A. J. Wensinck, *Tree and Bird as Cosmological Symbols in Western Asia*, Amsterdam 1921. Il motivo dell'albero che affonda le sue radici nell'oceano primordiale, sopra o sotto il quale si svolge la disputa fra Dio e il diavolo, appare in una leggenda degli Zigani della Transilvania (O. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen. Eine Sammlung Naturdeutender Sagen, Märchen, Fabeln und Legenden*, vol. I. *Sagen zum Alten Testament*, Leipzig-Berlin 1907, p. 34 sg.; Eliade, *Zalmoxis*, p. 84 sg.). Già il Dähnhardt ha notato il parallelismo della leggenda zigana col racconto yezidico. Per il tema mitico dell'albero quale dimora della divinità cfr. Eliade, *Traité*, p. 280 sgg.

22) Siouffi, *art. cit.*, p. 252 sg. Nella notizia del Guérinot è presente il particolare di Sheikh Sinn creato dall'essenza divina, verosimilmente anch'esso in forma di uccello.

una domanda: „Chi sei tu e chi sono io?“. Gabriele rispose: „Tu sei tu ed io sono io!“. Come sottolinea lo stesso narratore, la risposta di Gabriele esprime la sua orgogliosa pretesa di porsi allo stesso livello del Creatore. A causa di ciò Dio scaccia Gabriele dall'albero e lo costringe a vagare sulla distesa acquosa. Ritornato presso l'albero, l'angelo ancora una volta risponde orgogliosamente alla domanda e, di nuovo allontanato da Dio, giunge presso il rosaio su cui dimora Sheikh Sinn. Questo lo ammaestra dicendogli: „Ritorna verso l'albero e quando ti porrà la stessa domanda, rispondigli in questi termini: 'Tu sei il creatore e io non sono che la tua creatura'“. Gabriele, comportandosi secondo il consiglio ricevuto, ottiene grazia da Dio e rimane presso di lui ²³).

Il senso generale del racconto è dunque quello di una tensione originaria fra il Creatore e un angelo, sia esso Gibrā'il che la cosmogonia del *Libro nero* conosce come collaboratore di Dio nella formazione del mondo e dell'uomo, sia invece Melek Tā'ūs, il „capo degli angeli“ secondo il medesimo testo, la cui attività demiurgica consiste, secondo una variante del mito, nella creazione di Eva ²⁴) ovvero nella plasmazione dello stesso Adamo ²⁵), oltre che nella determinazione delle attuali condizioni di esistenza dell'uomo.

Ad illustrare il senso specifico dell'attività creatrice dell'angelo yezi-dico, è utile aggiungere qui che nella versione del mito in esame riferita dal Lescot, la quale presenta Melek Tā'ūs quale protagonista dell'originario contrasto con Dio, all'episodio sopra riferito segue tosto il racconto della creazione ²⁶). Una volta formati da Dio cielo e terra,

23) Siouffi, *art. cit.*, p. 253 sg.; Guérinot, *art. cit.*, p. 595 sg. Cfr. anche Furlani, *op. cit.*, p. 36 sg.

24) Cfr. Dirr, *art. cit.*, p. 565. Secondo il *Libro nero* è Gibrā'il a formare Eva da una costola di Adamo (Furlani, *op. cit.*, p. 86, 21; cfr. Joseph, *art. cit.*, p. 223), come si afferma anche nella tradizione orale riferita dallo Heard (*art. cit.*, p. 206). La possibilità di attribuire a due diversi personaggi la medesima azione demiurgica è un ulteriore indizio del ruolo fondamentalmente analogo che entrambi svolgono secondo la dottrina yezidica.

25) Cfr. Lescot, *op. cit.*, p. 56 e nota 2. L'autore riferisce che secondo questa tradizione lo stesso Melek Tā'ūs avrebbe vivificato Adamo, insufflando l'anima attraverso l'orecchio (*ibid.*, p. 57). Ricordiamo infine una ulteriore notizia, secondo la quale Adamo sarebbe stato plasmato da Dio e da lui animato mediante l'intromissione, nel corpo inerte del primo uomo, dell'angelo Sheikh Sinn (Siouffi, *art. cit.*, p. 256; Guérinot, *art. cit.*, p. 600).

26) Nella versione del Siouffi la cosmogonia è preceduta dall'episodio della barca con i sei personaggi vaganti sul mare primordiale (vedi *infra*), cui seguono

l'Angelo Pavone si rivolge al Creatore dicendogli: „Non c'è nessuno in questo mondo'. Dio gli rispose: 'Va in giro per l'universo!' Tawûsê Melek andò e vagò attraverso l'universo. Vide una donna. (Allora) ritornò verso Dio e gli disse: 'Ho visto una donna!' Tawûsê Melek disse a Dio: 'Questa donna senza uomo non serve a nulla!' ". Dio quindi plasma Adamo e gli insuffla l'anima ²⁷⁾).

Una serie di motivi atti a qualificare il personaggio dell'Angelo Pavone emergono chiaramente da questa narrazione: appare in essa il tipico stile interlocutorio del „secondo" di tanti miti etnologici, il quale assiste all'opera creatrice di Dio pronto a criticarla, a scorgerne le eventuali manchevolezze ovvero a sollecitarla nella direzione da lui voluta ²⁸⁾. Del tutto conforme alle personalità di Melek Tâ'ûs, nella sua qualità di collaboratore e integratore della „creazione di base", è poi la circostanza del „trovare" la donna, circostanza in cui si esprime la fondamentale casualità del suo agire demiurgico, per contrasto con l'azione finalistica e volontaristica dell'Essere supremo. Come tipologicamente affine al mito yezidico si può ricordare un racconto d'ambiente australiano in cui un personaggio di collaboratore-avversario „trova" due donne nelle acque di un lago ma, incapace di animarle, si rivolge al Creatore che dà loro la vita ²⁹⁾. Così nella narrazione yezidica, lo stesso Melek Tâ'ûs riconosce l'inutilità della propria „scoperta", se essa non sia completata da Dio con la plasmazione dell'uomo. Tanto più chiara appare allora la fisionomia del personaggio e la natura dualistico-dialettica della sua primitiva tensione con il Creatore, quale risulta nelle fonti yezidiche dalla ignoranza dell'angelo-uccello che non riconosce Dio nel suo interlocutore ma soprattutto dall'orgoglio di lui, che pretende di affermare la propria autonomia e indipendenza rispetto al Creatore.

La pretesa, giustificata o menzognera, di una autonomia di natura e di azione da parte del „secondo", avversario dell'Essere supremo in

i racconti relativi alla formazione di Adamo ed Eva (*art. cit.*, pp. 256-258); tale attività è attribuita a Dio stesso secondo il modello biblico e coranico, sia pure con l'intervento di particolari originali (incarnazione di Sheikh Sinn in Adamo, etc.).

27) *Op. cit.*, p. 58.

28) Cfr. Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso*, p. 70 sg.; pp. 75-78 (miti dei Maidu californiani, relativi al Coyote); *passim*.

29) R. Brough-Smith, *The Aborigines of Victoria*, vol. I, London 1878, p. 427; Bianchi, *Le dualisme en histoire des religions* in „R.H.R.", CLIX, 1 (1961), p. 13 nota 1; Id. *Trickster e demiurghi presso culture primitive di cacciatori* in „Festschrift Walter Baetke", Weimar 1966, p. 71 sg.

numerosi miti etnologici, è un dato ben noto, caratterizzato in vario modo nei singoli contesti ³⁰). Esso appare egualmente in numerose leggende diffuse nell'Europa orientale e nell'Asia centro-settentrionale; fra esse sono significative in questa sede soprattutto quelle che presentano Dio e il suo collaboratore-avversario in forma di uccelli in uno scenario di ampiezza cosmica in cui campeggia il mare primordiale ³¹).

Nella cosiddetta *Leggenda del Mare di Tiberiade* si ha una situazione originaria per molti aspetti analoga a quella del mito yezidico: sulla distesa del mare discende Dio; egli vede un uccello acquatico, Satanael, e gli chiede chi sia. „Io sono Dio. — E me, allora, come mi chiami? — Tu sei il Dio degli dèi e il Signore dei Signori”. Questa risposta soddisfa Dio che ordina a Satanael di effettuare il pescaggio della terra ³²). Appaiono qui alcuni elementi tipici quali il mare primordiale, Dio e il suo interlocutore in forma di uccello, la domanda del Creatore cui però segue il riconoscimento della superiorità di Lui, sebbene Satanael proclami se stesso „Dio”.

Secondo Eliade l'ornitomorfismo dell'avversario è un tratto di sicura origine centro-asiatica ³³); esso ritorna in una leggenda della Grande Russia ³⁴), mentre in una versione mitica della Russia settentrionale

30) Cfr. gli esempi etnologici citati, a proposito di questo mito, in Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso*, p. 51 sg.; Id., *Pour l'histoire du dualisme: un coyote africain, le renard pâle in Liber amicorum. Studies in honour of Professor dr. C. J. Bleeker*, Leiden 1969, pp. 27-43.

31) Il tema mitico del mare originario ricorre parimenti nella narrazione cosmogonica attribuita da Teodoro bar Konai (*Libro degli Scolii*, XI in H. Pognon, *Inscriptions mandaites des coupes de Khoubir*, Paris 1898-1899, pp. 209-212) alla setta siriaci dei Quqiti, una interessante anche se poco nota comunità di Edessa che avrebbe operato una sorta di sincretismo cristiano-pagano, in chiave gnostico-dualistica. Presso tale setta tematiche folkloriche rifluiscono in un contesto gnosticheggiante, e il motivo del mare primordiale dal quale emerge la somma divinità appare trasferito ad un livello spirituale. Esso infatti è identificato con il „mare angelico” (o „mare vegliante”), il quale è situato „nella terra della luce” (Pognon, *op. cit.*, p. 209 sg.). Sui Quqiti si veda H. J. W. Drijvers, *Quq and the Quqites. An unknown sect in Edessa in the second century A.D.* in „Numen”, XIV, 2 (1967), pp. 104-129; U. Bianchi, *Religioni e movimenti sincretistici nella Siria-Mesopotamia dei primi secoli d. C.* in *Storia delle religioni* a cura di G. Castellani, vol. III, Torino 1971, pp. 571-573.

32) Dähnhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 45; cfr. Eliade, *Zalmoxis*, p. 97.

33) *Zalmoxis*, p. 98; sull'importante ruolo degli uccelli nella mitologia asiatica centro-settentrionale cfr. *ibid.*, p. 108 sg.

34) *Zalmoxis*, p. 99. Tale ornitomorfia dell'avversario, che si integra nel quadro generale dei miti in questione, i quali contemplano il motivo del pescaggio della terra effettuato dal personaggio immergendosi nel mare originario, è presente in

sono entrambi i personaggi, Dio e l'avversario, che si presentano in forma di uccelli nuotanti nel mare originario ³⁵). Il medesimo motivo ritorna nei miti dei Tataři dell'Abakan ³⁶) e dei Tataři dell'Altai ³⁷), presso cui acquista un netto carattere dualistico, per la tenace opposizione dell'collaboratore-avversario nei confronti del Creatore.

Nel mito yezidico la tensione di timbro dualistico fra Dio e Gabriele (ovvero Melek Tā'ūs) non è molto accentuata e la vicenda si risolve, per la mediazione di un terzo personaggio in funzione di messaggero-istruttore ³⁸), con il riconoscimento della dipendenza dell'angelo nei confronti di Dio.

Un racconto del tutto simile al nostro è attestato in almeno due testi ahl-i haqq e in una tradizione orale dal medesimo ambiente; queste fonti, pur contemplando alcuni particolari originali attribuibili alla diversità del contesto generale e soprattutto alle forti tendenze speculative delle dottrine ahl-i haqq, presentano parimenti una originaria situazione di contrasto fra il Creatore e il primo angelo. Appare lo stesso

numerosi altri racconti diffusi nell'area storico-culturale indicata. Tra essi ricorderemo un mito dei Ceremissi (Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 100).

35) Dähnhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 47; cfr. U. Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völkern*, tr. fr., Paris 1959, p. 71; Eliade, *Zalmoxis*, p. 99.

36) Eliade, *Zalmoxis*, p. 103. Il mito, raccolto dal Radlov (W. Radlov-H. T. Katanov, *Proben aus der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme Süd-Sibiriens*, IX Teil, Saint-Petersburg, 1907, p. 222 sg.) è riferito anche in W. Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, Münster i.W., vol. IX (1949), p. 512 sg.; vol. XII (1955), p. 22 sg.

37) Dähnhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 3 sgg.; cfr. Harva, *op. cit.*, p. 70; Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso*, p. 182 sg.; Eliade, *Zalmoxis*, p. 103 sg. La fonte è sempre Radlov, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 175-184; cfr. Id., *Aus Sibirien*, Leipzig 1884, II, pp. 3-5; Schmidt, *op. cit.*, vol. IX, pp. 102-104; p. 126 sg.; vol. XII, pp. 15-17.

38) Mentre nella versione riferita dal Siouffi e dal Guérinot è Sheikh Sinn ad ammaestrare Gabriele (vedi sopra), secondo la notizia del Lescot Dio stesso appare all'angelo „nel suo aspetto ordinario” per istruirlo (*op. cit.*, p. 57 sg.). Questa variante del mito appare del tutto conforme alla narrazione ahl-i haqq che, contemplando una analoga situazione di originario contrasto fra il Dio sommo e Gabriele, attribuisce al primo l'iniziativa di rivelare all'angelo la propria natura e potestà divina, manifestandosi a lui nelle forme di un fanciullo (Mokri, *La naissance du monde*, p. 164; Id., *L'ésotérisme kurde*, p. 20 sg.). Sulla probabile origine iranica di tale nozione del „fanciullo” divino cfr. Mokri, *La naissance du monde*, p. 166; Id., *L'ésotérisme kurde*, p. 24. Non ci sembra fondata l'affermazione del Dähnhardt che definisce „zurvanita” il mito yezidico riferito dal Siouffi e identifica, con scarsa legittimità, il personaggio di Sheikh Sinn con Zurvan, ritenendo Dio e Gabriele corrispondenti ai „gemelli” Ohrmazd e Ahriman dei miti zurvaniti (*op. cit.*, p. 28 sgg.).

scenario delle acque primordiali ³⁹⁾, la creazione di Gabriele in forma di uccello, il suo vagare sulla distesa marina ⁴⁰⁾ e soprattutto il motivo della ignoranza del personaggio ⁴¹⁾ e il suo orgoglio nel rispondere alla domanda di Dio. Se nello *Šahnâmâ-ye Haqîqat* l'angelo si riconosce come „un essere libero nel mondo” e dichiara di non conoscere alcuno che abbia potere su di lui ⁴²⁾, nel trattato *Tadkerat-ol a'lâ* che riferisce il medesimo episodio con qualche variante, la risposta di Gabriele è identica a quella dell'angelo yezidico: „Tu sei tu ed io sono io” ⁴³⁾. In questa seconda versione l'ammaestramento di Gabriele avviene ad opera di un personaggio che vagava sul mare primordiale sopra un „tappeto di preghiera”; costui, quale il giovinetto luminoso dello *Šahnâmâ-ye Haqîqat*, è la stessa somma divinità ⁴⁴⁾.

39) *Šahnâmâ-ye Haqîqat* (pp. 36-37) in Mokri, *La naissance du monde*, p. 163; cfr. Id., *L'ésotérisme kurde*, p. 19: „Mentre la Verità era nascosta nella Perla nel cuore del Segreto, il mondo da un capo all'altro era coperto dal mare”.

40) *Loc. cit.*; „Allora lo gettò nel mare. Gabriele vi aprì le sue ali coperte di piume, esse si misero a battere nel mare senza limiti e Gabriele non era sottomesso a Dio. Egli era turbato in tutti i luoghi e salvo se stesso non vedeva traccia di alcuno”. L'angelo era stato creato da Dio da un seme racchiuso nella Perla primordiale, prescelto dal Creatore perchè da esso potesse derivare „un uomo degno”; esso sarà Gabriele, creato con „un'apparenza simile al sole splendente”, destinato ad essere, per decreto divino, „il Signore (*Pîr*) e la guida (*Emâm*) dei due mondi”. Questa funzione attribuita all'angelo degli Ahl-i Haqq e la sua supremazia su tutta la creazione saranno affermate nettamente alla conclusione della vicenda: „O Signore dal cuore luminoso, tu sei leale e il Confidente discreto del Dio-Giudice, l'Intendente di Dio e il capo. Tu puoi disporre a tuo piacimento dei due mondi, di tutte le creature nella loro essenza e nei loro attributi. Tu sei la guida di tutte le creature, vizir e Confidente discreto del Re. Nessuno ha supremazia su di te, dopo di me tu sei il Dio delle creature” (Mokri, *La naissance du monde*, p. 164; Id., *L'ésotérisme kurde*, p. 22). In questa glorificazione di Gabriele, e soprattutto nel riconoscimento della sua qualità di „sovrano dei due mondi”, si nota quella medesima tendenza a ritenere un angelo come delegato di Dio nel governo del mondo e delle creature che, presso gli Yezidi, ha fatto di Melek Tâ'ûs il personaggio centrale nell'attualità religiosa, quale rappresentante privilegiato del sommo Dio. In tono minore è fatto l'elogio di Gabriele dopo il suo pentimento nel trattato *Tadkerat ol a'lâ* (Mokri, *La naissance du monde*, p. 166).

41) Sulla „ignoranza” dell'angelo i testi ahl-i haqq insistono a lungo (cfr. *Šahnâmâ-ye Haqîqat apud* Mokri, *art. cit.*, p. 163 sg.).

42) Mokri, *art. cit.*, p. 163.

43) *Ibid.*, p. 165; cfr. *L'ésotérisme kurde*, p. 22 sg. La punizione che colpisce Gabriele per questa orgogliosa risposta ha un netto sapore folklorico: Dio rivolge su di lui il suo sguardo ardente e gli incenerisce le ali, sicchè l'angelo precipita in fondo al mare. Nella versione orale del medesimo mito riferita dal Minorsky appare il particolare delle ali bruciate a causa dell'affermazione tracotante dell'angelo („Io sono io, tu sei tu”) alla domanda di Dio (*Notes sur la secte des Ahlê Haqq*, I, p. 25).

44) Mokri, *La naissance du monde*, p. 165; Id., *L'ésotérisme kurde*, p. 23.

I dati essenziali del racconto relativo al diverbio originario fra Dio e l'angelo, presente con sostanziale identità in ambiente yezidico ed ahl-i haqq, sono parimenti attestati in un poemetto composto da un autore islamico, Fârigh, nell'anno 1591/92 per glorificare ʿAlī. Si tratta di un documento di religiosità shiita a tendenza estremista, poichè ʿAlī appare come un personaggio semi-divino, documento nel quale rifluiscono numerose leggende popolari ⁴⁵). Ne risulta confermata la diffusione a livello folklorico nel mondo irano-islamico, già in età safavide, del motivo della contesa fra Dio ed un personaggio originario, identificato con l'angelo che nell'Islam ufficiale ha dignità privilegiata e attribuzioni importanti quale messaggero di Allah ⁴⁶). Sembra pertanto legittimo concludere che il motivo in esame appartiene ad un fondo di religiosità popolare comune alla vasta area culturale est-europea e centro-asiatica, il quale ha diversamente reagito secondo i contesti nei quali è stato assorbito. Così nel poemetto di Fârigh esso è utilizzato al fine della esaltazione di ʿAlī, identificato con il „segreto di Dio” che ammaestra Gabriele sulla risposta atta a soddisfare la domanda del Creatore ⁴⁷), mentre la tensione fra i personaggi della vicenda è poco accentuata e la fisionomia dell'angelo, salvo l'incidente in questione, non si discosta da quella comunemente nota in ambiente islamico. Nella speculazione ahl-i haqq l'angelo venuto in contrasto con Dio ha una più netta rilevanza, essendo egli la prima manifestazione della divina potenza creatrice e soprattutto il delegato della divinità nel governo dei due mondi; il motivo della sua originaria ignoranza ed opposizione, sia pur soltanto verbale, al Creatore assume pertanto una qualche connotazione in senso dualistico. Infine, presso gli Yezidi il personaggio, che

45) Cfr. Bausani, *Persia religiosa*, p. 365 sg. L'episodio che ci interessa è riassunto alle pp. 367 sg. La sostanziale identità con il racconto ahl-i haqq sopra esaminato è stata riconosciuta dallo studioso (*ibid.*, p. 382; cfr. Id., *Religioni nuove sorte dall'Islam*, p. 240). Aggiungiamo soltanto che la leggenda riferita da Fârigh non conosce il motivo della nascita di Gabriele dalla Perla, il quale è caratteristico della cosmogonia ahl-i haqq.

46) Gabriele in alcuni luoghi coranici è presentato in particolare rapporto con il Profeta (*Sura* II, 97; LXVI, 4). Cfr. *Il Corano*, tr. di A. Bausani, p. 506 sg. nota 98. In un passo di Ibn Ishāq-Ibn Hishām, l'Arcangelo rivela a Maometto, nel corso di una visione, la sua qualità di inviato di Dio (Bausani, *ibid.*, Introduzione, p. XXV). Si può ricordare inoltre che nella tradizione islamica spesso Gabriele è immaginato in forma di uccello e talvolta presentato come residente sui rami di un albero del Paradiso (cfr. Muhammad Iqbāl, *Il Poema celeste*, tr. e note di A. Bausani, Roma 1952, p. 32 nota 11).

47) Bausani, *Persia religiosa*, p. 368.

in tale vicenda si alterna con Melek Tā'ūs (cui altre fonti attribuiscono anche un'altra forma di tensione con Dio, avendo egli sollecitato la colpa di Adamo), e che, come l'Angelo Pavone, riceve delle chiare attribuzioni demiurgiche, risulta più legittimamente situabile nella categoria tipologica del „collaboratore-avversario” di miti e leggende di tono più o meno nettamente dualistico.

La presenza fra gli Yezidi di temi mitici molto diffusi nelle tradizioni popolari dell'ampia area culturale est-europea ed asiatica e soprattutto la caratterizzazione in senso dualistico di tale complessa mitologia, è confermata dal séguito del racconto cosmogonico, quale è riferito dal Siouffi. Si narra che, dopo l'episodio di Gabriele, Dio creò ancora tre angeli insieme con i quali, oltre che con Gabriele e Sheikh Sinn, prese posto in una barca che per lungo tempo vagò sul mare primordiale. Durante questo viaggio sorse una contesa fra i sei personaggi, poichè ciascuno „pretendeva di essere il Dio unico ed onnipotente”. Infine essi, per porre fine al contrasto, stabilirono che „colui fra di loro che avesse avuto tanto potere da rendere spesso l'acqua fino a farla solidificare e che avesse sospeso la volta celeste, sarebbe stato considerato l'unico Dio onnipotente”. Mentre gli sforzi degli altri risultarono vani, Dio „sputò nel mare, e subito l'acqua si trasformò in una massa solida che divenne la terra” 48).

Il motivo della nave su cui Dio si muove attraverso l'oceano primordiale, già presente nel *Libro nero*, è noto in una leggenda della Bucovina 49) e in un'altra della Polonia 50); il tema esaminato della disputa per la supremazia fra l'Essere supremo e il collaboratore-avversario di tanti miti etnologici e di leggende popolari euro-asiatiche, qui risulta allargato e complicato per la presenza di sei personaggi originari. Rimane comunque la soggiacente motivazione dualistica di tale tema mitico, qualificato qui in un senso ancora più specifico rispetto all'episodio di Dio e Gabriele, poichè la disputa si compone attraverso quella tipica „prova di forza” che è la creazione. Infatti proprio nel campo della creazione di base fallisce l'azione del „secondo”, il quale anche nei numerosi miti che narrano il pescaggio della terra si rivela impotente ad effettuarlo se non in esplicita obbedienza al volere di Dio e in

48) Siouffi, *art. cit.*, p. 255; Guérinot, *art. cit.*, p. 599 dove si dice che Dio „con un alito possente congelò una parte del mare”.

49) Dähnhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 43; Eliade, *Zalmoxis*, p. 85 sg.

50) Eliade, *Zalmoxis*, p. 86.

ogni caso non può operare la formazione della terra a partire dal fango raccolto, essendo questa una competenza esclusiva dell'Essere supremo ⁵¹). Anche l'immagine prescelta per descrivere il modo con cui Dio opera la creazione, lo sputo sulle acque, mostra un chiaro aspetto folklorico e trova riscontro, tra l'altro, in un racconto dei Mordvini dove il Creatore (Tšam-Pas), residente su una roccia nell'oceano primordiale, sputa sull'acqua dando così origine ad una montagna ⁵²).

Nei due episodi sopra commentati, oltre che nei racconti relativi alla cacciata di Adamo dal Paradiso, ci è sembrato di poter sottolineare la presenza di una componente mitica di timbro dualistico più o meno netto, la quale peraltro esercita la propria funzione e rilevanza soprattutto nel momento delle origini, mentre nella attualità della esperienza religiosa degli Yezidi appare integrata in una prospettiva che conosce la positività sostanziale dell'Angelo Pavone. La stessa connessione di quest'ultimo con la sfera delle funzioni biologiche dell'uomo non si traduce in un deprezzamento ovvero in un rifiuto di quelle funzioni medesime. Vero è che in seguito all'intervento di Melek Tā'ūs risulta instaurato un nuovo regime di vita, quello in cui attualmente l'uomo si trova a vivere, con i suoi condizionamenti biologici, implicanti le malattie e il dolore, sconosciuti nella dimora paradisiaca. Proprio la circostanza che l'attribuzione di tali funzioni (nutrizione e generazione) ad un autore diverso da Dio non si traduca in un anticosmismo del tipo noto ai vari sistemi gnostici dei primi secoli d.Cr., appare allora rivelatrice della particolare qualità del dualismo soggiacente alle dottrine yezidiche esaminate. Si tratta, infatti, di una impostazione dualistica di tipo dialettico, implicante l'ammissione di due „fonti” diverse della realtà, più o meno radicalmente contrapposte, le quali coesistono e sono entrambe, in varia misura e a diverso titolo, ritenute necessarie al funzionamento del mondo ⁵³).

Alla definizione di questo quadro concorre efficacemente una leggenda

51) Cfr. Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso*, passim; Eliade, *Zalmoxis*, pp. 81-109.

52) Dähnhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 60 sg.; Schmidt, *op. cit.*, vol. XII, p. 45 sg.; Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso*, p. 187; Eliade, *Zalmoxis*, p. 88.

53) Per la definizione di una tale forma di dualismo di tipo metafisico e dialettico, implicante la coesistenza di due principi „irriducibili e complementari, per quanto caratterizzati spesso da disparità di valore”, cfr. Bianchi, *Le dualisme en histoire des religions*, p. 41; Id. (ed.), *Le origini dello gnosticismo*, Colloquio di Messina 13-18 Aprile 1966, Leiden 1967, p. XXIII; Id., *Pour l'histoire du dualisme*, pp. 27-43, in particolare p. 41.

attestata dal Kovalevsky ⁵⁴), la quale occupa un posto del tutto particolare nell'ambito della nostra documentazione sullo yezidismo. Secondo tale racconto, quando Dio ebbe creato „il mondo bello e perfetto in tutte le sue parti”, Melek Tā'ūs intervenne affermando: „La tua opera non è perfetta, o Gran Creatore, poichè tutto in essa è uniforme e non possiede il necessario equilibrio; non può esserci luce senza tenebra, giorni senza notti, profumi senza cattivi odori, angeli senza demoni e senza *hourī*”. Ricevuto il permesso di Dio („va e crea”), Melek Tā'ūs discese dal cielo e „il suo glaciale respiro produsse il male in contrasto con il bene”. Segue la descrizione della attività demiurgica del personaggio, la quale si pone per un verso come una sorta di „contro-creazione” negativa ⁵⁵) ma per l'altro come un completamento e una integrazione rispetto all'opera del Creatore.

In questa vicenda la figura di Melek Tā'ūs assume una chiara connotazione dualistica, nella misura in cui la sua azione, in deciso contrasto con l'operato di Dio, modifica sostanzialmente la situazione originaria introducendo tutta una serie di realtà negative. L'intervento del personaggio, in tal modo, pone fine alla condizione originaria di equalità fondata da Dio, condizione cui già si accennava in altre versioni cosmogoniche e alla quale anche questo mito allude, sia nella iniziale affermazione di Melek Tā'ūs („la tua opera... è uniforme e senza equilibrio”) che nel seguito del racconto, attribuendosi all'opera dell'angelo l'alternarsi del giorno alla notte, del caldo al freddo, della tempesta alla calma. L'Angelo Pavone, in questa versione mitica, appare con una fisionomia che si può definire senz'altro fortemente analoga a quelle figure di (avversari)-demiurghi „critici” di mitologie primitive e tradizioni popolari euro-asiatiche, i quai intervengono a „guastare” e „completare” l'opera del Creatore introducendo i mali e le difformità che caratterizzano il mondo attuale.

L'affinità tipologica fra il mito yezidico in questione e la nozione iranica di un mondo contaminato dall'intrusione di Ahriman che attua la mescolanza dei beni con i mali è stata rilevata dal Dähnhardt, sia

54) É. de Kovalevsky, *Les Kourdes et les Iésides*, *op. cit.*, p. 174. Cfr. Dähnhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 27).

55) „Le piante velenose crebbero sulla terra, bestie feroci popolarono le foreste, mostri furono generati fra gli uomini, e il peccato si sviluppò rapidamente. Allora apparvero anche spiriti malvagi e i diavoli tentatori” (Kovalevsky, *loc. cit.*; Dähnhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 28).

pure nel contesto della sua interpretazione in chiave „zurvanita” della mitologia yezidica ⁵⁶). E' stato parimenti notato che l'idea di una originaria „equalità” su cui il nostro mito insiste in vario modo è anche essa presente nell'ideologia mazdaica ⁵⁷), soprattutto nelle sue espressioni più tarde che, accentuando la formula dualistica simmetrica, tendono ad attribuire all'opera dell'avversario la presenza dei contrasti e delle tensioni che si manifestano nei vari livelli della realtà. La qualità in qualche misura „ahrimanica” del Melek Tā'ūs della versione mitica riferita dal Kovalevsky trasparirebbe soprattutto dalla circostanza che a lui si attribuisce, oltre che l'origine delle piante velenose, degli animali feroci e delle nascite mostruose fra gli uomini, anche quella degli „spiriti malvagi e dei diavoli tentatori” ⁵⁸). Comunque una fondamentale riserva si impone ad un siffatto accostamento tra i due personaggi, in considerazione della diversa struttura delle rispettive formule dualistiche, iranica e yezidica. La prima implica, soprattutto nelle sue più tarde teorizzazioni in senso simmetrico, la estraneità e originaria separazione di Ohrmazd ed Ahriman e sottolinea il carattere „esterno” prevalentemente negativo e distruttore di quest'ultimo nei confronti della creazione divina ⁵⁹). Al contrario, il personaggio di Melek Tā'ūs, anche

56) *Op. cit.*, p. 28. Per una critica dell'ipotesi di una diffusione dall'Iran di tutti gli elementi dualistici presenti in ambiente euroasiatico cfr. Bianchi, *Le dualisme en histoire des religions*, p. 15 sg.

57) Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso*, p. 53; cfr. Id., *Zamān i Ōhrmazd*, p. 126 sgg.

58) La vicenda dell'Angelo Pavone si conclude con la sua cacciata dal cielo, in punizione delle funeste azioni compiute. Egli allora nell'oscurità notturna andò vagando in varie regioni senza trovare asilo; soltanto „un popolo che abita la Mesopotamia lo accolse e gli diede l'asilo che non aveva trovato altrove sapendo che Maelk Taouze è forte, che è uno spirito destinato forse a ritrovare il suo potere e comprendendo che creando il male Maelk Taouze aveva soltanto voluto far risplendere il bene” (Kovalevsky, *art. cit.*, p. 175). La riabilitazione di Melek Tā'ūs, fondamentale nella tradizione yezidica, appare qui soltanto come un'ipotesi su cui la comunità si sarebbe fondata per prestare culto all'angelo decaduto. Comunque rientra nel quadro che andiamo tracciando la notazione relativa al carattere, sia pure per contrasto, positivo dell'azione di Melek Tā'ūs; notazione che sottolinea la tipica funzione „complementare” del personaggio.

59) Aspetti in qualche misura integrativi e complementari assume la stessa figura ed attività di Ahriman in tutta una tradizione iranica „eterodossa”, di ispirazione zurvanita, quale è attestata soprattutto in fonti tardive e non iraniche. Cfr. Bianchi, *Zamān i Ōhrmazd*, p. 141 sgg., pp. 168-173, pp. 230-235; Id., *Pour l'histoire du dualisme*, p. 31, p. 41 sg.; *Alcuni aspetti abnormi del dualismo persiano* in „Atti del Convegno internazionale sul tema: „La Persia nel Medioevo”, Acc. Naz. lincei, Anno CCCLXVIII, 1971, Quaderno 160, Roma 1971, pp. 149-164; C. Scibona Giuffré, *Il tema dell'insufficienza del creatore in alcune testimo-*

nella versione mitica riferita dal Kovalevsky, esplica un'attività complementare rispetto al Creatore, essendo la sua azione, pur nei suoi aspetti inferiori o francamente negativi, piuttosto integrativa e connessa, in maniera funzionale, con la creazione di base operata da Dio, sì da qualificarsi come pressochè ineliminabile dall'attuale panorama esistenziale. Il mito esaminato, d'altra parte, pur notevole e significativo, è solo uno dei tanti racconti cosmogonici presenti nell'ambiente religioso in questione e non può essere assunto come modulo unico per l'interpretazione di tutto lo yezidismo. Senza minimizzare la sua importanza, crediamo legittimo ritenere che esso rappresenti una tradizione particolare, nella cui elaborazione potrebbe aver agito in parte l'influsso del dualismo iranico, il quale avrebbe contribuito a caricare di aspetti „ahrimanici” la fisionomia di Melek Tā'ūs. Tale tradizione coesiste con una serie di narrazioni per le quali si parlerà piuttosto di una „tensione”, anch'essa peraltro di timbro più o meno chiaramente dualistico, fra i personaggi in azione (Dio-Gabriele, Dio-Melek Tā'ūs). D'altra parte, nella attualità religiosa la figura dell'Angelo Pavone è oggetto di somma venerazione in quanto ogni traccia di contrasto con il sommo Dio si ritiene ormai superata in maniera definitiva. Egli dunque, a differenza dei collaboratori-avversari di tanti miti etnologici cui pure è fenomenologicamente apparentato, non esaurisce la propria funzione ed attività nel momento delle origini, ma è un personaggio presente nel culto e nella religiosità attuali. In pari tempo, diversamente dall'Ahriman iranico o, in altro contesto, dal Satana-Iblis della tradizione biblica e coranica, non è considerato come attualmente malvagio, cioè come una figura di perturbatore della realtà in cui gli uomini si trovano a vivere. L'Angelo Pavone degli Yezidi è dunque una figura *sui generis*, assai specifica e unitaria, sebbene alla sua formazione abbiano potuto contribuire elementi di diversa origine e consistenza ⁶⁰). In questa

nianze sulla cosmogonia iranica in „Umanità e Storia. Scritti in onore di A. Attisani”, vol. II, Messina 1971, pp. 669-696. I testi sullo zurvanismo *apud* Zaehner, *Zurvan, A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, Oxford 1955.

60) Nel manoscritto pubblicato dal Joseph si riferisce un racconto relativo alle cause e alle circostanze del primitivo decadimento di Melek Tā'ūs; esse, in questa fonte, sono pressochè identiche a quelle addotte in alcuni ambienti mistici islamici per spiegare la caduta di Iblis. Quest'ultimo, come l'Angelo Pavone nel testo del Joseph (*art. cit.*, p. 235 sg.), avrebbe rifiutato di venerare Adamo (su tale rifiuto cfr. *Corano*, II, 34; VII, 11-18; XV, 31-40; XVII, 61-65; XVIII, 50; XX, 116; XXXVIII, 74-85) per non tradire la professione di fede monoteistica (cfr. L. Massignon, *Al Hallāj. Le phantasme crucifié des docètes et Satan selon les Yézidis*

sede interessa sottolineare che la sua natura e la sua azione, nella stessa attualità del culto e della vita religiosa, in cui non sembrano molto diverse da quelle di un Essere supremo, avendo egli assunto alcune delle funzioni e degli attributi del sommo Dio ⁶¹), non cessano dall'integrare un quadro di tipo dualistico-dialettico, rispetto al quale appare coerente l'idea medesima della positività attuale di Melek Tā'ūs, quale secondo ed ineliminabile principio della realtà, e parimenti l'accettazione dei risultati della sua attività originaria e fondante ⁶²).

in „R.H.R.", 63, 1911, pp. 195-207, in particolare p. 202 sgg.; Lescot, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-53; Bausani, *Persia religiosa*, pp. 257-264). Il problema di una eventuale influenza di tali speculazioni eterodosse, le quali esaltavano Satana facendone una tragica e sublime figura di „amico di Dio", capace di accettare la dannazione pur di non rinnegarne l'unicità, e che talvolta contemplavano la possibilità della riabilitazione dell'angelo caduto (cfr. Rûmî apud Bausani, *op. cit.*, p. 274 sg.), nella formazione della dottrina yezidica intorno a Melek Tā'ūs non può essere affrontato in questa sede. Cfr. Bois, *art. cit.*, pp. 203-206. Si noti comunque che, a differenza dell'Iblis dei mistici, il quale attende una eventuale riabilitazione, persistendo tuttora la sua condizione di distacco da Dio, l'Angelo Pavone yezidico è considerato — meno che nella tradizione riferita dal Kovalevsky (sopra n. 58) — già reintegrato nella originaria condizione di privilegio.

61) L'idea che Melek Tā'ūs sia l'attuale reggitore del mondo si integra, d'altra parte, nel quadro della dottrina yezidica delle successive ere cosmiche, a ciascuna delle quali presiede — per incarico divino — uno dei sette angeli.

62) Presso gli Yezidi — come già si è detto — non appare un atteggiamento antisomatico ovvero un rifiuto della generazione, che del resto sarebbe poco compatibile con la loro struttura di setta-popolo. Un certo deprezzamento dell'elemento femminile e della funzione generativa, tuttavia, traspare dalle narrazioni relative alle origini del popolo yezidico (cfr. „Numen" XXI, 3 (1974), p. 197 n. 2).

DIE ZAUBERSPRÜCHE IM ALTHOCHDEUTSCHEN *

VON

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Die Erforschung der Rolle, die die Magie bei rezenten Primitivvölkern spielt, hat eine Reihe von Resultaten gezeitigt, die interessante Erhellungen für die prähistorischen und frühhistorischen Völkergruppen erwarten lässt. Nicht dass man generell bei Naturvölkern sichtbare Phänomene fraglos auf prähistorische Verhältnisse übertragen dürfte — das ist ein methodischer Fehler, der vielen Forschern zu unterlaufen droht — aber es gibt doch Verhältnisse, die mit gebührender Vorsicht als Parallelerscheinungen über die Zeiten hinweg gewertet werden dürfen und eine Übertragung erlauben.

Wenn wir die ahd Zaubersprüche näher untersuchen wollen, so müssen wir uns zuerst einmal nach dem Zweck solcher Sprüche überhaupt fragen. Die einfache Antwort, dass die Zaubersprüche dem Zwecke des Zauberns dienen, rührt tiefer an die Probleme, als wir bei leichtem Dahinsprechen dieser Antwort ahnen. Was heisst „zaubern“?

Wenn wir Jensens Ausführungen folgen ¹⁾, so hängen Zauber und Magie aufs engste zusammen, sind aber nicht dasselbe, wie oft gemeint wird. Zauber betrachtet er als degenerierte, sekundäre Form der Magie. Wie ist das zu verstehen? Um dies erklären zu können, müssen wir zuerst den Begriff der Magie definieren.

Magie ist Wirkung von Kraft oder, was dasselbe ist, Wirkung von Mana. Mana kann man als eine Kraftladung ansehen, die Gegenständen und Menschen innewohnen kann (z.B. Totempfähle, Häuptlinge etc.). Die magische Praxis versucht willentlich Kraftübertragung auszuüben, um ein bestimmtes Ziel zu erreichen, ist also Ausübung von Macht. Das geschieht in der Primitivsituation aber nicht etwa willkürlich und sinnlos, sondern vollzieht sich in völliger Überein-

*) Althochdeutsch wird in diesem Aufsatz ahd oder Ahd abgekürzt.
Dem Zeichen ö in den Hss entspricht die Umschreibung vo.

1) Ad. E. Jensen, *Mythos und Kult bei Naturvölkern*, Wiesbaden 1960, Kp. XI.

stimmung mit dem entsprechenden Weltbild. Innerhalb desselben ist die magische Praxis sinnerfüllt. Gerät diese Praxis aber ohne Modifikation in ein verändertes Weltbild, so sinkt sie zur blossen Zauberei ab ²⁾). Als Beispiel kann etwa die Sterndeuterei dienen, die in Babylon ihre sinnvolle Bedeutung so gut wie in der Kultur der Maya hatte, im christlichen Weltbild aber zur Scharlatanerie absank, wo sie nur vorgeblich noch sinntragend wirken konnte. Magische Formeln sind zählebig und werden besonders im einfachen Volke von Generation zu Generation treulich überliefert, auch wenn die religiösen Formen der betreffende Kultur scheinbar längst ausgestorben sind. Bald aber wird ihr Inhalt und tieferinnerlicher Bezug nicht mehr verstanden. So gelangen sie auch ohne weiteres von einer Kulturstufe in eine andere, z.B. aus einer Primitivsituation in eine Hochkultur oder in eine andere religiöse Umgebung, wo sie dann im Weltbild nicht mehr integriert sind, wenn auch eine Umfunktion versucht wird. Allfällige Götternamen werden durch andere, in der neuen Umgebung heimische, ausgetauscht. Dies Problem stellt sich z.B., wenn wir in den ahd Sprüchen auf die Namen Jesu Christi oder eines Heiligen stossen.

Bevor wir die ahd Sprüche aber vorstellen, wollen wir uns noch fragen, wie denn Magie wirke, wenn sie doch nicht eitel Scharlatanerie sein soll.

Das Weltbild des Primitiven beruht darauf, dass er jede Erscheinung der Natur und sich selbst als Teil eines Ganzen, des Kosmos, auffasst ³⁾). Er fühlt sich in dem Ganzen aufgehoben, fürs Ganze aber auch mitverantwortlich. Was immer irgendwo geschieht, es hat seine Auswirkungen aufs Ganze. Die Ordnung des Kosmos ist keineswegs endgültig und fest verankert, sondern befindet sich in einer Art labilem Gleichgewicht. Überall und zu jeder Zeit lauert das Chaos, ob es eine Einbruchsstelle fände, von wo aus es die Ordnung vernichten könne. Diese braucht demnach, soll sie erhalten bleiben, einer periodischen Bestätigung und Stärkung. Der Mensch ist nun u.a. dazu da und hiefür geschaffen, wie viele Mythen der alten und neuen Welt ausdrücklich festhalten, dass er das Seine dazu beitrage, den Kosmos zu befestigen. Das tut er durch den Kult, durch den Vollzug von Riten. Dabei nimmt die Analogie- und Sympathie-Magie eine ganz besonders hervorragende Stellung ein. Sie beruht auf der Vorstellung, dass sich im Grossen, im

2) a.a.O.

3) Kosmos im Sinne des griech. *κοσμεῖν* verstanden.

Makrokosmos, dasselbe ereigne, was im Kleinen, im Mikrokosmos, geschieht und umgekehrt.

Sollte z.B. der Regen allzulange ausbleiben, so dass eine Katastrophe zu befürchten ist, versuchte man den Himmel zu beeinflussen. So verhalten sich die Eingeborenen Borneos als ob es regnen würde, giessen Wasser aus — und wenn es das letzte ist —, nehmen ein Palmblatt über den Kopf und jubeln und tanzen. Der Himmel wird sich von dieser Freude anstecken und sich nicht beschämen lassen wollen und bringt Regen. Diese Analogie-Magie beruht auf der Ansicht der *pars pro toto*-Wirkung und ist dynamistisch. Die ihr eng verwandte und oft nicht sauber von ihr zu scheidende sympathetische Magie hat ihre Grundlagen im Animismus d.h. das Gegenüber, das beeinflusst werden soll, ist ein belebtes Wesen. Es handelt sich nicht mehr um eine Wirkung über ein *pars pro toto*-Verhältnis, sondern Gleiches oder Ähnliches vollzieht sich hier und, durch das Hier bewirkt, auch dort.

Das wohl eindrucklichste Beispiel dafür war zweifellos das Akitu-Fest in Babylon. Der Hohepriester des Marduk und die Oberpriesterin der Ištar vollzogen auf dem Stufenturm, dem E-temen-an-ki, zwischen Himmel und Erde den Hieros Gamos, damit der Himmel sich dadurch erotisch stimulieren lasse und so Regen zur Erde niedersende und das Land befruchte.

Eine weitere Art der magischen Praxis beruht auf der Vorstellung, dass neben sinnlich wahrnehmbaren Vorgängen sich parallel dazu auch geistige abspielen. Da man nun auf die Körperwelt und ihre Verknüpfungen nur beschränkt Einfluss nehmen konnte, so wurde versucht, auf geistiger Ebene in den Kausalnexus einzugreifen. Konnte man dort Veränderungen hervorrufen, die Abläufe also nach eigenem Willen steuern, so musste das auf die sinnlich wahrnehmbaren Vorgänge die entsprechenden Auswirkungen haben. Sollte dies nicht gelingen, so wurde nicht etwa die magische Praxis in Zweifel gezogen, wie wir modernen Mitteleuropäer es tun würden, sondern das Versagen einer magischen Handlung wurde darauf zurückgeführt, dass eine stärkere magische Macht den Erfolg hindere.

Ganz besonders geeignet zur Ausübung magischer Wirkung musste das Wort bzw. die Sprache sein. Der Charakter der Sprache mit ihrem Verhältnis von Designans und Designat musste schon dem Primitiven aufgefallen sein, wenn er es auch nicht zu formulieren vermochte. Unleugbare Tatsache aber ist, dass die Sprache durch die Einbildungs-

kraft Bilder hervorrufen kann, die realiter nicht präsent sind. Das Wort ist schöpferisch. Daraus erklärt sich das Wesen des Mythos. Mythos ist schöpferisches Wort, ist Hieros Logos. Wird Mythos erzählt, so geschieht buchstäblich das wieder, was er enthält. Mythos wurde nur an ganz bestimmten Tagen und nur an bestimmten Orten rezitiert und war oft genug nicht Allgemeingut einer gesamten Menschengruppe, sondern es wurden z.B. Frauen und Kinder davon ausgeschlossen.

Wird der Welterschöpfungsmythos erzählt — und er muss in bestimmten zeitlichen Abständen erzählt werden — so sorgt der Erzähler damit für den Bestand der Welt. Dem ständig durch das Chaos bedrohten Kosmos und den Göttern wird gleichsam in Erinnerung gerufen, wie die Ordnung sei. Daraus resultiert deren Stärkung.

Ist nun in irgend einem Falle die Ordnung im Kosmos gestört, so wird sofort Gegenmassnahme ergriffen. Es sei hier der Fall einer Krankheit angenommen. Wird ein Mensch oder ein Tier krank, so ist es auch der Kosmos, weil der Kranke Bestandteil desselben ist.

Wie ist der Krankheit beizukommen? Sicherlich nicht so, dass man durch irgendwelche materiellen Mittel auf die Krankheit direkt einzuwirken sucht; solches käme erst an zweiter Stelle. Zuerst muss die Welt in Ordnung gebracht werden. Darum wird die Krankheit in einem kosmischen Zusammenhang gesehen und manchmal auch als Urzeitgeschehen gewertet, d.h. man setzt die Situation voraus, dass die Krankheit in der Schöpfung ein erstes Mal aufgetreten sein muss und damals von einer Gottheit in ihrer Wurzel zerstört wurde. Die Krankheit und ihre Heilung wird so zu einem mythischen Geschehen erhoben. Indem nun der Mythos von der ersten Besiegung dieser Krankheit erzählt, wird sie wiederholt und gegenwärtig gemacht. Urzeitgeschehen wird aktualisiert. Damit ist die Heilung eingeleitet.

Ein schönes Beispiel hierfür gibt Gressmann aus dem babylonischen Bereiche 4). Es handelt sich um eine Beschwörung gegen Zahnschmerz.

Nachdem Anu [den Himmel erschaffen],
Der Himmel [die Erde] erschaffen,
Die Erde die Flüsse erschaffen,
Die Flüsse die Gräben erschaffen,

4) H. Gressman, *Altorientalische Texte zum Alten Testament*, Berlin und Leipzig, 1926, p. 133.

Die Gräben den Morast erschaffen,
 Der Morast den Wurm erschaffen hatte,
 Ging der Wurm weinend vor Šamaš,
 Vor Ea fließen seine Tränen.
 „Was gibst du (mir) zu meiner Speise,
 Was gibst du (mir) damit ich es sauge?“
 „„Ich werde dir geben eine reife Feige (?), einen Granatapfel (?) (und
 einen Apfel!““
 „Was soll ich mit einer reifen Feige (?), einem Granatapfel (?) und
 einem Apfel?“
 „Erhebe mich und lass mich zwischen den Zähnen und dem Zahn-
 fleisch (?) wohnen!“
 „Der Zähne Blut lass mich aussaugen!“
 „Und des Zahnfleisches (?) Zahnwurzeln (?) lass mich zerfressen!“
 „„Den Schlosspflock mache fest, den Fuss halt (an)!““
 „„Weil du solches gesagt hast, o Wurm,““
 „„Möge dich Ea schlagen mit seiner starken Hand!““

Beschwörung gegen Zahnschmerz

Behandlung dafür: Schlechtes Mischbier und Oel vermische miteinander,
 sage dreimal die Beschwörung darüber her und lege (es) auf seinen
 (des Kranken) Zahn.

Hier wird Ea in Erinnerung gerufen, dass er einst in Urzeiten den Wurm, der in einem Zahn nagte, vernichtete und so den Zahnschmerz stillte. Nach der Rezitation dieser Verse kann nun Ea eigentlich gar nicht anders, als seine Handlung von einst wiederholen, weil sonst der Kosmos aus den Fugen geraten würde, ist doch die Zahnheilung ein kosmisches Gesetz geworden.

Eine, wenn auch nicht so kunstvolle und konsequent durchgeführte ahd Parallele, die Urzeitgeschehen oder besser gesagt, Rückgriff auf den Anfang der Welt mitteilt, ohne die Krankheit als solche dort anzusiedeln, kennen wir aus einer vatikan. Handschrift. Es handelt sich um einen Text, der von Pferdekrankheit handelt. Dabei ist besonders der zweite Teil zu beachten.

- (1) Ad pestem equi. quod dicitur môrth. dic. Iohan. vuas êin mán. Farês sin sÿn. genâsín thes. so do diz rós. des mordes. Pater noster. ter.
- (2) Item ad equum infusum. dic. Xrist vvârd an êrthe gebóren. in cribbi givvôrfen. in slúthere bebúnden. sa uerlóren. Der heilige Crist byoce dísimme rosse. N. ouervággenes. gerâys. thes vvâmbízige thes vvúrmes. unthe álles thes. the íme scathene sí. in nomini domini! Daz tír ze bóze. Pater noster. post eadem ter.⁵⁾

5) Elias v. Steinmeyer, Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler, Berlin 1916, p. 370.

- (1) Zur Pferdekrankheit, die „Mord“ genannt wird, sag: Johannes war ein Mann. Phares sein Sohn. Er genas davon (von einer Krankheit). So tue dies Ross vom „Morde“. Dreimal ein Vater unser.
- (2) Desgleichen zu einem Pferd, dem etwas angeworfen wurde⁶⁾, sag: Christ ward in die Welt geboren, in eine Krippe gelegt, in Windeln⁷⁾ gewickelt, so verloren. Der heilige Christ heile dieses Ross von irgend einer Reizung (Krankheit)⁸⁾, die es angefallen hat, vom Beissen (?) des Wurms, und von allem dem, das ihm schade. Im Namen des Herrn. Das dir zur Heilung (gesagt). Ein Vater unser (und) danach noch drei.

Den ersten Spruch betrachten wir nicht näher. Beim zweiten Spruche wird der Beginn der christlichen Welt beschworen, ohne dass auch nur im mindesten ein Zusammenhang mit der Pferdekrankheit ersichtlich wäre, im Gegensatz etwa zum zitierten babylon. Spruch. Der Mythos wird erzählt, weil in den Anfängen der christlichen Welt die Ordnung neu festgesetzt wurde. Diese Welt ist nach kurzer Erwähnung jenes ersten Ereignisses, nämlich Christi Geburt, in ihrer Ordnung neu gestärkt, demnach kann die Heilung des Pferdes eintreten.

Wir entnehmen diesen Tatsachen einmal, dass in einem „Zauberspruch“ Mythos erzählt wird.

Eine ganze Reihe der ahd „Zaubersprüche“ bestätigt dies. Die sog. *Merseburger Zaubersprüche* tradieren noch rein altgermanisches Gut. Die sog. *Bamberger Blutsegen*, *Gegen Fallsucht*, *De hoc quod spurialz dicunt*, *Ad catarrum dic*, *Incantacio contra equorum egritudinem quam nos dicimus spurialz* und in gewissem Sinne auch *Ad equum errēhet* scheinen eine christliche Mythologie vorauszusetzen. Bei näherer Betrachtung wird aber bald klar, dass diese christliche Färbung meist nur davon herrührt, dass statt germanischer Götternamen der Name Christi oder eines christlichen Heiligen im Spruche erscheint. Im Aufbau ist aber nicht der geringste Unterschied, das zeigt deutlich eine Parallelisierung des 2. *Merseburger Zauberspruches* mit der *Incantacio*.

2. Merseburger Zauberspruch

Phoelnde uuodan uuorun zi holza
du uuart demo balderes uolon sin uuoz birenkit

6) Infundere: hineinschütten, verbreiten (se pestis tectis, Sil. 17, 507; darein-, darauf-, darübergegossen (pestis medullis, Sil. 1, 173).

7) Im Ahd scheint das Wort „sluthere“ nicht weiter belegt zu sein. Das Schweizerische Idiotikon, Wörterbuch der schweizerdeutschen Sprache 9, 796f vermeldet für „schlutt, schlutte“ „Kinderjäckchen, Leibchen für Wiegenkinder, Gewand der Wiegenkinder, Nachleibchen für Kinder“.

8) Gereize, geraize: seditio, concitatio; reiz: ulcus (Geschwür), pestis.

thu biguolen sinthgunt . sunna era suister
 thu biguolen friia uolla era suister
 thu biguoleb uuodan so he uuola conda
 sose benrenki sose bluotrenki
 sose lidirenki
 ben zi bena bluot zi bluoda
 lid zi geliden sose gelimida sin.⁹⁾

Phol und Wotan ritten in den Wald.
 Da ward dem Ross Balders der Fuss verrenkt.
 Da besprach ihn Sinthgund der Sonne Schwester,
 da besprach ihn Freia der Volla Schwester,
 da besprach ihn Wotan so gut er es vermochte.
 Sobald Beinverrenkung, sobald Blutverrenkung,
 sobald Gliederverrenkung (auftritt),
 (dann) Knochen zu Knochen, Blut zu Blut,
 Glied zu Gliedern (so fest zusammen) als ob sie geleimt wären.

Incantatio contra equorum egritudinem quam nos dicimus spurialza

Quam Krist endi sancte Stephan zi ther burg zi Saloniun; thar uuarth sancte
 Stephanes hros entphangan. Soso Krist gibuoza themo sancte Stephanes
 hrosse thaz entphangana, so gibuozi ihc it mid Kristes fullesti thessemo hrosse.
 Paternoster.

Uuala Krist thu geuuertho gibuozeian thuruch thina gnatha thessemo hrosse
 thaz antphangana atha thaz spurialza, sose thu themo sancte Stephanes hrosse
 gibuoztos zi thero burg Saloniun. Amen.¹⁰⁾

Zauberformel gegen die Pferdekrankheit, die wir Lahmen nennen

Christ und Sankt Stephan kamen zur Stadt Salonium (Jerusalem?); da ward
 des Sankt Stephan Ross (von einer Krankheit) angefallen. Wie Christ des
 Sankt Stephan Ross von dem Angefallenen heilte, so heile ich es mit Christus
 Hilfe bei diesem Rosse.

Vater unser.

Wohl, Christ, geruhe durch deine Gnade diesem Rosse das Angefallene oder
 das Lahmen zu heilen, so wie du des Sankt Stephan Ross (einst) heiltest in
 der Stadt Salonium. Amen.

Beide Male geht es um eine Pferdekrankheit. Der Merseburger Zauber-
 spruch verlegt die Verrenkung des Beines in altgermanische mytho-
 logische Urfern. Damals geschah es, dass Phol-Balders¹¹⁾ Pferd
 bei einem Ausritt einen Fehltritt tat und sich den Fuss verrenkte.
 Mehrere Gottheiten besprechen den kranken Fuss. Das bedeutet: Im
 Fuss ist etwas in Unordnung geraten. Der Kosmos stimmt nicht mehr.

9) Nach Hs.

10) E. v. Steinmeyer, p. 367.

11) A. Heusler, Die Altgermanische Dichtung, Potsdam 1941, p. 58.

So muss zunächst dies in Ordnung gebracht werden. „Beguolan“ ist von einem „be-guot-an“, d.i. „begütigen, gut machen“ herzuleiten (vgl. das „buozzan“ des christlichen Spruches, das dieselbe Bedeutung hat). Gut machen heisst: Wieder ins Lot bringen, wieder in den Kosmos eingliedern. Das „Kosmisch-Machen“ drückt sich nachher in der Beschwörung Gleiches zu Gleichem aus. Spricht man diesen Mythos über einen Fall, der heute und jetzt geschah, aus, so tritt das Gesetz der Analogie ein. Urzeitgeschehen wiederholt sich.

Nicht umsonst ist der Spruch auch in Stabreimen gehalten, ist der Stabreim doch Sinnbild der Ordnung. Der Haft dieser Ordnung sind die Stäbe, die die zwei Halbverse aneinander binden und gleichsam Zusammengehöriges aneinander ketten.

Heusler hat gezeigt, dass durch eine indische Zauberveda dieser magische Spruch zum ältesten indogerman. Erbe gehört ¹²⁾.

In der Incantacio geschieht Ähnliches. Sankt Stephans Pferd lahmt bei einem Ausritte plötzlich. Der Heiland heilte das Tier. Und nun folgt hier, was wir im germanischen Spruche nur angenommen haben, die Parallelisierung von Einst und Jetzt. „So (nämlich wie Christus dort und einst dem Pferde Sankt Stephans Hilfe angedeihen liess), bringe ich ihm, diesem Rosse (nämlich dem Pferde das hier und jetzt krank ist), durch Christi Gnade Hilfe“. Echt christlich folgt im Spruch nun ein Pater noster.

Bemerken wir beim christl. Spruche auch das Verb „entphahan“. „Fahan“ bedeutet „fassen, fangen“; „ent-fah-an“ meint „empfangen, erhalten, befallen werden“. Das Pferd wird also von etwas erfasst, ergriffen, angefallen. Dasselbe drückt im Mersburger Zauberspruch das Passiv „uuart birenkit“ aus. Nicht das Pferd verstauchte sich den Fuss, sondern an ihm wurde diese Verrenkung „getan“. Es wird von etwas „erfasst, ergriffen, angefallen“. Sprachlich ist noch ganz genau zu ermitteln, wie man sich die Entstehung einer Krankheit vorstellte. Der Betroffene wurde angefallen, nämlich von einer negativen, bösen Macht. Und diese galt es durch Ausübung einer Gegenmacht zu vernichten. Eine solche Handlung aber bezeichnen wir als Magie.

Ein Beispiel von sympathet. Magie liegt im 1. *Merseburger Zauberspruch* vor.

12) a.a.O. p. 59.

Eiris sazun idisi sazun hera duoder
 suma hapt heptidun suma heri lezidun
 suma clubodun umbi cuoniouuidi
 insprinc . hapt bandun inuar uigandun ¹³⁾

Einst setzten sich Frauen nieder, setzten sich nieder hier und dort.
 Einige banden Fesseln, einige hielten das Heer auf,
 einige nestelten an den Fesseln.
 Entspring, Gegangner, den Banden, entschlüpf den Feinden!

In der letzten Zeile überliefert die Hs. „insprinc . haptbandun“. Man fasst dieses Wort allgemein als ein Compositum auf und übersetzt es mit „Fesselband“. Nun ist die Wortabgrenzung im Ahd nicht unbedingt verbindlich, so dass ich die Zeile wie oben gegeben auflösen möchte. „Hapt“ wäre dann ein Vocativ, „bandun“ ein Dat. Pl. Als Begründung für diese Wortabgrenzung kann ich hier allerdings nur geltend machen, dass mir die Aufforderung und Nennung des Gefangenen in diesem letzten Spruchteil evidenter erscheint, als eine blossе, nicht ausgeprägt zielgerichtete Aufforderung den Fesseln sich zu entwinden. Zeile 2 und 3 muten etwas konfus an, denn was soll bedeuten: „Einige banden Fesseln, einige hielten das Heer auf, einige nestelten an den Fesseln“?

Es kann dies wohl nur so gedeutet werden, dass der 1. Halbvers der zweiten Zeile sich auf eine Schar von Feinden bezieht, die von den Frauen gefesselt werden. Die ganze Zeile 2 handelt von der Behinderung der Feinde, die Zeile 3 beschäftigt sich ausschliesslich mit der Befreiung eines Freundes. Wir hätten drei Gruppen von Frauen vor uns, von denen die erste Fesseln um Feinde schlägt, eine zweite das angreifende feindliche Heer aufhält, indes die letzte Gruppe den Gefangenen befreien kann.

Doch die Schwierigkeiten sind noch nicht zu Ende. Wir haben uns auch über das Wort „idisi“ Rechenschaft zu geben. „Itis“, as. „idis“, ags. „ides“, das hier für Frauen verwendet wird, erscheint nach Ausweis des Wörterbuches von Graff sehr selten in der ahd Überlieferung, nämlich zweimal in Glossen des 8./9. Jh. im Reichenauer Codex 86 und in einem Codex aus St. Peter (beide in Karlsruhe) in der Bedeutung „matrona“, und einmal bei Otfrid (I, 5, 6) „zi deru itis frono“.

Das Wort dürfte kaum indogerman. Ursprungs sein, sondern könnte möglicherweise dem Wortschatz des von der indogerman. Sprache über-

13) Nach Hs.

lagerten Substrates entstammen. Otfrid bezeichnet mit ihm die Jungfrau Maria, wodurch es einen Glanz von Heiligkeit erhält. Es hat den Anschein, als ob mit diesem uralten Worte nur ganz besondere Frauen bezeichnet worden seien, um deren ganze Ehrwürdigkeit auszudrücken.

Demnach sitzen keine gewöhnlichen Frauen zusammen, sondern es handelt sich um irgendwie ausgezeichnete, mit Macht begabte, ohne dass wir ihre Eigenart näher zu bestimmen wüssten. Heusler nennt sie die „urtümlichen Gegenstücke der nordischen Walküren“, ohne indes eine nähere Erklärung dazu abzugeben¹⁴⁾.

Es handelt sich wie gesagt um drei Gruppen von wenigstens je 4 Frauen, denn „suma“ wäre für die Zweizahl ein recht merkwürdiger Ausdruck und auch für die Dreizahl noch ungewöhnlich, da sich diese noch gut auf einen Blick übersehen und registrieren lässt. Erst vier analysiert das flüchtige Auge nicht mehr so ohne weiteres, so dass das Bedürfnis entsteht, von einigen zu sprechen. Möglicherweise haben wir zudem ursprünglich magische Zahlen anzunehmen. 3×3 wäre in dieser Hinsicht günstig, da die Dreiheit mit sich selbst multipliziert erschiene, die Dreiheit an sich aber als magische Zahl eine bedeutende Rolle spielt (z.B. die hlg. Dreifaltigkeit). Wahrscheinlicher wäre aber 3×4 , was ein Dutzend ausmacht, eine magische Zahl par excellence (z.B. 12 Tierkreiszeichen, 12 Jünger, das 60er System der Babylonier). Hingegen fallen 3×5 oder 3×6 , auch wenn man sie in 3 ($3 + 2$) bzw. 3 ($3 + 3$) auflösen würde, aus dem Rahmen. Die nächstfolgende Zahl 3×7 hingegen wäre wiederum eine magieschwangere Zahl.

Die Zahlenmagie kann bezüglich des vorliegenden Zauberspruches aber nur am Rande erwähnt werden, da wir keinerlei eindeutige Anhaltspunkte dafür haben.

Wie mächtig die Frauen sind, mag man der Zeile 2 entnehmen. Wie anders wäre es den Frauen möglich, die Feinde zu fesseln und ein Heer aufzuhalten, wenn nicht durch magische Handlungen? Die drei ersten Zeilen des Zauberspruches geben Mythos wieder; die letzte verbindet das Einst mit dem Jetzt, ist Einst und zugleich Jetzt.

Damals haben die Frauen diese Aufforderung an den Gefangenen gerichtet, der daraufhin entsprang; darum wird der Lösezauber auch heute wiederum wirksam werden.

In christliche Bereiche gelangen wir mit den *Bamberger Blutsegen* und dem Trierer Spruch *Ad catarrum dic.*

14) A. Heusler, p. 59.

Bamberger Blutsegen

- (1) Crist unte iudas spíliten mit spieza. do wart
der heiligo xrist wnd insine sítan. do nâmer
den dvmen. unte uordûhta se uorna. So uerstant
du bluod. sóse iordanis áha uerstunt. do der
heiligo iohannes den heilanden crist in íro
tovfta. daz dir zobvza.

Christ und Judas spielten mit Spiessen. Da ward ¹⁵⁾
der heilige Christ in seiner Seite verwundet. Da nahm er
den Daumen und drückte vorne auf sie (die Verwundung). So bleib stehen,
du Blut, wie des Jordans Fluss stehen blieb, als der
heilige Johannes den Heiland Christus in ihm
taufte. Das dir zur Heilung (gesprochen).

- (2) Christ wart hi erden wnt.
daz wart da ze himele chunt.
izne blvotete. noh ne svar.
noch nechein eiter ne bar.
taz was ein file gvote stunte.
heil sis tu wnte.

In nomine ih'u xpi. daz dir ze bvze. Pater noster.
ter. Et addens hoc item ter. Ich besuere dich bi den
heiligen fûf wnten. heil sis tu wnde. et Per patrem.
et filium. et spiritum scm̄. fiat. fiat. Amen. ¹⁶⁾

Christ ward hier auf Erden wund,
das ward da im Himmel kund.
Es blutete nicht, weder schmerzte es,
noch Eiter sammelte es.
Das war eine höchst gute Stunde.
Heil seist du, Wunde.

Im Namen Jesu Christi. Das dir zur Heilung (gesprochen). Drei Mal
ein Vater unser. Und füge drei weitere hinzu. Ich beschwöre dich bei
den heiligen fünf Wunden: Heil seist du, Wunde. Sowohl durch den
Vater, als auch durch den Sohn und den heiligen Geist. Also geschehe
es, also geschehe es. Amen.

Ad catarrum dic

Christ uuarth giuund, tho uuarth he hel gi ok gisund.
that bluod forstuond: so duo thu bluod!
amen Ter. Pater noster Ter. ¹⁷⁾

15) Braune/Ebbinghaus, Althochdeutsches Lesebuch, Tübingen 1965, 14. Auflage, XXXI 6a. a) p. 90.

16) a.a.O. XXXI 6a. b) p. 90.

17) E. v. Steinmeyer, p. 378.

Gegen Nasenbluten sprich

Christ ward verwundet, da ward er heil und auch völlig gesund.
Das Blut hörte auf zu fließen: so tue du, Blut.
Drei Amen. Drei Vater unser

Alle drei Sprüche nehmen auf das zentrale Ereignis der christlichen Heilsgeschichte oder vielmehr des christlichen Mythos Bezug, auf Christi Sterben am Kreuz. Am simpelsten drückt es der Trierer Spruch aus. Einst war Christus verwundet worden. Er wurde wieder gesund. Das Blut floss nicht mehr. Nun soll auch hier und jetzt das Blut nicht mehr fließen. Angefügt sind drei Amen und drei Paternoster, Bekräftigungswort und zentrales Gebet der christlichen Religion.

Anspruchsvoller gestaltet ist der zweite Bamberger Spruch. Bemerken wir rein äusserlich, dass er gereimt ist. Hier wird gleichsam das Beschwörend-verbindende im Endreime sichtbar. Reim ist Klang, ist Musik. Musik wiederum bedeutet Harmonie und Ordnung. Den Endreim kannte die germanische Tradition nicht, und wir dürfen ihn als eigentlich christliches Wesensmerkmal betrachten.

Als Christus auf Erden Wunden empfing, wurde dies im Himmel kund. Auf Grund dieser Kenntnis, so müssen wir den Spruch gedanklich ergänzen, wurde dem Blutfluss Einhalt geboten (vielleicht durch Gott Vater). Auch schmerzten die Wunden nicht und es trat keine Vereiterung auf. Das war ein gutes Ereignis (taz was ein file gvote stunte). Warum? Die Antwort ist leicht gegeben. Weil einst bei Christus das Blut gestillt wurde, die Wunde nicht schmerzte und nicht eiterte, so wird dasselbe nun bei dem hier und jetzt Verwundeten geschehen, sobald man diesen Spruch über ihm spricht. Und darum folgt nun noch der Wunsch: „Heil seist du, Wunde.“

Das ungereimte Schlusswort ist eine Verstärkung des Spruches: Im Namen Christus. Das soll dir zur Besserung dienen, soll dir Abhilfe schaffen. Durch die Nennung von Christi Namen wird dieser herbeibeschworen oder vielmehr seine Kraft gezielt aktiviert, denn „welcher Geist ruft, ein solcher erscheint“ könnte man mit Novalis sagen¹⁸⁾.

Es folgen 2 × 3 Paternoster. Vielleicht ist dahinter eine alte magische Zahlenkombination zu sehen, etwa in der Drei eine Bezugnahme auf die Dreieinigkeit — die im Nachfolgenden in der Tat auch angerufen wird — und in der Zwei die Verdoppelung. Diese Feststellung

18) Novalis, Gedichte. Romane, Manesse Bibliothek, Zürich 1968, p. 27.

mag banal klingen, kann indes aber zur bessern Wirkung der magischen Praxis von Bedeutung sein.

Eine weitere Verstärkung des Zaubers erfolgt durch die Präzisierung von fünf Wunden, damit kein Zweifel daran sein könne, dass die fünf Wunden Christi gemeint seien, und dass durch deren Nennung diese gleichsam ihre ganze Manapotenz über den Verwundeten ergiessen. Nennung bedeutet aufrufen, heraufrufen, wirksam machen. Es folgt der heilige Segen, das „dreimal glühende Licht“¹⁹⁾, das wohl darum genannt wird, weil die Wunde vom Satan bzw. seinen Helfershelfern, einem der schwarzen Magie Mächtigen, geschlagen sein könnte.

Es ist das dieselbe Praxis wie der Schamane sie anwendet, wenn er bei einem Krankheitsfall die guten Geister beschwört, ihm im Kampfe gegen die finstern Dämonen beizustehen, in deren Fesseln der Kranke liegt. Krankheit und Tod kann von irgend einem Feind einem Menschen angehext werden. Dazu bedient er sich der schwarzen Magie, indem er sie entweder selbst ausübt oder einen andern, den er der schwarzen Magie mächtig weiss, dazu auffordert.

Der Unterschied zwischen der sogenannten weissen und schwarzen Magie ist nur eine Aspektverschiebung des Phänomens Magie, ein Unterschied in der Ausübung besteht nicht. Schwarze Magie nennt man in der Primitivsituation die Kraft- und Machtenfaltung gegen eigene Stammesgenossen. Solches gilt als eines der grössten Verbrechen innerhalb des Stammesverbandes und wird aufs härteste bestraft.

Das „fiat, fiat“ am Ende des Spruches kommt einer abschliessenden besonders eindringlichen Beschwörung gleich, damit der Vorgang der Heilung wirksam eingeleitet werde.

Höchst merkwürdig ist der Mythos des 1. *Bamberger Blutsegens*. Christus und Judas spielen mit Speeren. „Spielen“ muss hier im Sinne von „einen Wettkampf austragen“ verstanden werden, wie der 1. *Strassburger Blutsegens* es nahe legt, der das Thema des Wettkampfes mit tödlichem Ausgang für einen der Teilnehmer, ganz analog schildert.

1. *Strassburger Blutsegens*

Genzan unde Iordan keiken sament sozzon.
to uersoZ Genzan Iordane te situn.
to uerstont taz plvot. uerstande tiz plvot,
stant plvot, stant plvot fasto!²⁰⁾

19) Goethe, Faust, 1319.

20) E. v. Steinmeyer, p. 375.

Genzan und Iordan gingen zusammen schiessen.
Da schoss Genzan Iordan in die Seite.
Da blieb das Blut stehen. Es bleibe dieses Blut stehen,
stehe, Blut, stehe sofort, Blut!

Der einzige Unterschied zwischen diesem und dem 1. Bamberger Spruch besteht darin, dass an Stelle der Namen Christus und Judas, der vandalische Männername Genzan und der etwas merkwürdig anmutende Iordan stehen.

Es ist charakteristisch, dass im Bamberger Spruch bei diesem Wettkampfspiel Judas und Christus sich gegenüber stehen. Kein anderer Jünger hätte im Zusammenhang mit diesem Zaubersprüche genannt werden können, da keiner in der neutestamentlichen Überlieferung je gegen Christus auftrat oder sonstwie seine Persönlichkeit ihm entgegengesetzte. Judas aber, der Christus verriet, ihm allein konnte das Missgeschick mit dem Speere passieren — wofern es überhaupt ein Missgeschick war!

Die geschilderte Szene erinnert sehr an Balders Verwundung und Tod durch den blinden Hödr, die ebenfalls bei einem Wettspiel geschah²¹⁾. Wir vermuten deshalb, dass die Geschichten von Genzan und Iordan einerseits und Christus und Judas andererseits ihre Wurzel in dem obgenannten germanischen Mythos haben.

So weit der Mythos. Nun darf aber Christus in diesem Zaubersprüche natürlich nicht sterben, sonst würde die magische Handlung negative Wirkung ausüben. Daher schlägt die Geschichte um. Christus presst den Daumen auf die Wunde und verstopft sie. Davon haben wir in den beiden vorangehenden Zaubersprüchen nichts erfahren. Wir entnehmen daraus, dass es so sehr auf die Einzelheiten der Handlung im Mythos nicht ankommt, sondern dass dieser Bereich für alle möglichen Varianten frei ist. Es muss nur die Grundkonzeption auf das zu erreichende Ziel ausgerichtet sein.

Der Vergleich vom Jordan und der Taufe Christi, der sich in dem Spruche als zweite Hälfte anschliesst, ist für diesen Zauberspruch irrelevant. Der Mythos des ersten Teiles genügt völlig, um die Blutung zu stillen. Abermals wird im zweiten Teil auf ein christliches Urzeitgeschehen zurückgegriffen, wenn auch ohne Not. Vielleicht gibt uns aber eine in Paris liegende Hs. nähere Auskunft über die bewusste Stelle. Darin heisst es:

21) Gylfaginning, c. 48.

Ad fluxum sanguinis narium

Xpict unde Iohan giengon zuo der Iordan. do sprach xpict: „stant, Iordan, biz ih unde Iohan uber dih gegan!“ also Iordan do stuont, so stant du .N. illivs bluot . hoc dicatur ter et singulis uicibus fiat nodvs in crine hominis. ²²⁾

Gegen Nasenbluten

Christ und Johannes gingen zum Jordan. Da sprach Christus: „Steh, Jordan, bis ich und Johannes über dich hinweggegangen sind!“ Wie der Jordan da (still) stand, so stehe du, des N. Blut. Dies soll drei Mal gesagt und jedes Mal ein Knoten in das Haar des Mannes gemacht werden.

Noch näher steht die ahd Einleitung in der Hs. Clm 100

Wazzer rinnet, Iordanis heizzet, da der heilige Christ inne getoufet wart. Eiter bistu, zegan soltu. ²³⁾

Es fließt ein Wasser, Jordan heisst es, darin der heilige Christ getauft ward. Bist du (schon da), Eiter, (dann) sollst du vergehen.

Ganz offenbar sind im 1. Bamberger Spruch Themen aus zwei verschiedenen selbständigen Zaubersprüchen in éinen verarbeitet worden. Es ist dies wohl dahingehend zu interpretieren, dass man eine Verstärkung erzielen wollte, indem man von der Menge der angeführten Argumente sich eine wirksamer Kraftladung erhoffte.

Beim Spruch gegen Nasenbluten ist besonders hübsch „hoc dicatur ter et singulis uicibus fiat nodvs in crine hominis.“ Durch den Knoten, der ins Haar geknüpft wird, will man gleichsam den Blutstrom unterbinden und so das Nasenbluten stillen.

Den zweiten Teil des 1. Bamberger Spruches, das *ad fluxum sanguinis narium* und die Einleitung zum Clm 100 können wir als ein magisches Unterfangen betrachten, das wir hier einmal als „Fern-Analogie“ bezeichnen möchten, obwohl wir uns der Problematik dieses Ausdrucks nicht verschliessen können. Was wollen wir hierunter verstehen? Bisher haben wir gesehen, dass Gleiches zu Gleichem beschworen wurde, etwa das Blut der Wunde eines Menschen mit dem Blut der Wunde Christi oder die Lahmheit eines Pferdes hier und jetzt mit der Lahmheit des Pferdes von Sankt Stephan. In der „Fern-Analogie“ wird geheilt durch die Beschwörung von Ähnlichem zu

22) E. v. Steinmeyer, p. 379.

23) a.a.O. p. 380.

Ähnlichem. Solches geschieht z.B., wenn das Fliessen des Jordan mit dem Fliessen von Blut in Zusammenhang gebracht wird.

Ein Beispiel anderer Art haben wir in dem niederdeutschen

De hoc quod spurialz dicent.

Primvm Pater noster

Visc flot aftar themo uuatare, uerbrustun sina uetherun.

tho gihelida ina use druhtin.

the seluo druhtin, thie thena uisc gihelda, thie gihele that hers theru spuri-helti. Amen. ²⁴⁾

Von dem, was man Lahmheit nennt

Zuerst ein Vater unser

Ein Fisch schwamm im Wasser, (da) verstauchte er seine Flossen.

Da heilte ihn unser Herr.

Derselbe Herr, der den Fisch heilte, der heile das Pferd von der Lahmheit. Amen.

Einst hatt der Herr einen Fisch geheilt, der seine Flossen verstaucht hatte. Jetzt soll derselbe Herr — man beachte die Betonung „the seluo“ — das lahrende Pferd heilen.

Das tragende Element dieser „Fern-Analogie“ ist hier die Tatsache der Heilung eines Tieres, einst Fisch, jetzt Pferd, und die Analogie Flosse-Fuss, die auf Grund der anatomischen Gegebenheiten völlig am Platze ist.

Wir wollen bei diesem Spruche aber etwas weiteres beachten. Bis jetzt war in allen Sprüchen das mythische Geschehen stets eindeutig als Urzeitgeschehen gekennzeichnet gewesen (Geburt Christi, Kreuzigung, Johannes der Täufer, St. Stephan). Bei der Heilung des Fisches ist die Urzeitsituation nicht mehr zwingend anzunehmen, da es Christus eigentlich unbenommen bleibt, wann er auf Erden erscheinen will. Andererseits liegt aber auch kein triftiger Grund vor, dieses Geschehen unbedingt ausserhalb der Urzeitsituation ansiedeln zu müssen, zumal Christus, wie etwa Prometheus, zum Typus der Heilsbringer gehört. Diese sind einmalige Erscheinungen in der Geschichte der Menschheit und haben ihren Platz in der Urzeit.

Ähnlich wie im Spruch gegen das Lahmen verhält es sich in dem Zwiegesprüche

24) a.a.O. p. 372.

Ad equum errehet

Man gieng after wege,
 zoh sin ros in handon.
 do begagenda imo min trohtin
 mit sinero arngrihte.

‘wes, man, gestu?
 zu neridestu?’
 ‘was mag ih riten?
 min ros ist errehet.’

‘nu ziuhez da bi fiere,
 tu rune imo in daz ora,
 drit ez an den cesewen fuoz:
 so wirt imo des erreheten buoz.’

Pater noster. et terge crura eius et pedes, dicens ‘also sciero werde disemo
 — cuiuscumque coloris sit, rot, suarz, blanc, ualo, grisel, feh — rosse des
 erreheten buoz, samo demo got da selbo buozta’.²⁵⁾

Zu einem Pferd, das steif ist

Ein Mann ging den Weg entlang,
 zog sein Ross mit den Händen.
 Da begegnete ihm mein Herr
 mit seiner Gnade.

‘Warum, Mann, gehst du?
 Warum reitest du nicht?’
 ‘Wie soll ich reiten?
 Mein Ross ist steif.’

‘Nun, zieh es da zur Seite,
 raune du ihm in das Ohr,
 gib ihm an den rechten Fuss einen Tritt:
 dann heilt seine Steifheit.’

Ein Vater unser. Dann reibe seine Schenkel und Füße und sage: ‘So schnell
 heile diesem — von welcher Farbe es auch sei rot, schwarz, weiss, fahl,
 grau (oder) gescheckt — Rosse seine Steifheit, wie jenes (das vorher er-
 wähnte) von Gott selber geheilt wurde.’

Besonders interessant ist die dritte Strophe. Christus instruiert den Mann genau, was er zu tun habe. Er weiht ihn in die magische Praxis ein. Er soll dem Pferde ins Ohr raunen. Was er ihm zuflüstern soll, das sagt der Spruch nicht. Wir dürfen aber annehmen, dass es ein magischer Spruch ist, ja wir sind verlockt zu vermuten, dass der Mann

25) a.a.O. p. 373.

dem Pferde eben diesen Mythos, der vor uns liegt, ins Ohr sprechen soll, genau wie es der jetzt Sprechende tut. Wir hätten dann das seltsame Phänomen, dass sich der Mythos gleichsam in sich selbst spiegelte, genau wie zwei Spiegel, einander gegenübergestellt, einen Gegenstand, der zwischen ihnen steht, unendlich oft ineinander wieder spiegeln. Es wird dadurch so etwas wie eine Kraftpotenzierung erreicht. Oder aber es war dem Pferd der unten in der „Gebrauchsanweisung“ stehende Spruch „also sciero . . .“ einzuflüstern.

Zudem tritt hier Kontaktmagie auf, d.h. Kraft wird durch Berührung übertragen. Das geschieht, wenn Christus den Mann auffordert, das Pferd an den rechten Fuss (siehe später) zu treten. Die Kraft der Ordnung, die in den gesunden Gliedern des Mannes steckt, wird dadurch gleichsam auf das kranke Glied des Tieres übertragen. Es wäre einmal zu untersuchen, welche Vorstellungen man ganz allgemein in bezug auf den Tritt hegte — man denke hier auch an die Tritte, die Mephisto bei seinen Heilungen am Kaiserhof gibt ²⁶⁾ — und welche Wirkungen man ihm zuschrieb.

Es folgt die Gebrauchsanweisung des obigen Spruches, nämlich „et terge crura . . .“. Bemerkenswert, dass sie in lateinischer Sprache abgefasst ist, da es sich nicht um magische Worte handelt. Das wurde verschiedentlich schon bei den Anmerkungen wie z.B. Ter Pater noster etc. sichtbar.

Magie des Worts wirkt dann am meisten, wenn die Sprüche in heimischer Sprache formuliert sind, besitzt doch keine Sprache in solchem Masse Kraft wie die Muttersprache. Eine Fremdsprache kann nie diese tiefen Schwingungen des Gemüts aktivieren. Nun ist es aber Tatsache, dass Hexenmeister gerne in einer verklausulierten, unverständlichen Sprache ihre Sprüche machten. Das ist eine sekundäre Degenerationserscheinung, als Magie zum blossen Zauber- und Hexenwesen abgesunken war.

Das betrifft selbstverständlich jene Sprüche nicht, die in einer altertümlichen Sprache verlauten. In diesem Falle bedeutet alte Lautung höhere Heiligkeit, höhere Macht- und Kraftpotenz, weil gleichsam noch etwas von jener Urzeit durchklingt. Das kann soweit gehen, dass spätere Generationen den Text überhaupt nicht mehr verstehen, nicht einmal der Rezitator selbst, und der Spruch nur aus Furcht, man würde

26) Goethe, Faust, 6335 ff.

bei Änderung in moderne Lautung die Manapotenz zerstören, in dieser archaischen Form belassen wird ²⁷⁾). Dass unverständlich gewordene Texte leicht verballhornt werden, versteht sich von selbst.

Die lateinische Gebrauchsanweisung finden wir wieder in dem aus St. Emmeram stammenden Spruche:

Gegen Fallsucht

Contra caducum morbum. Accede ad infirmum iacentem. et a sinistro vsque ad dextrum latvs spacians. sicque super eum stans dic ter.

Donerdutigo. dietewigo.

do quam des tiufeles sun. uf adames bruggon.

unde sciteta einen stein ce wite.

do quam der adames sun.

unde sluog des tiufeles sun zu zeinero studon.

petrus gesanta. paulum sinen bruoder. da ze rome.

aderon ferbunde pontum patum. ferstiez er den satanan.

also tuon ih dih unreiner athmo. fon disemo christenen lichamen.

also sciero werde buoz. disemo christenen lichamen.

so sciero so ih mit den handon. die erdon beruere.

et tange terram utraque manu. et dic pater noster. Post hæc transilias ad dextram et dextro pede dextrum latus eius tange et dic.

stant uf waz was dir. got der gebot dir ez.

hoc ter fac. et mox uidebis infirmum surgere sanum. ²⁸⁾

Gegen Fallsucht. Gehe zum liegenden Kranken hin und schreite von der linken auf die rechte Seite. Und so über ihm stehend sprich dreimal

Donnergnädiger (?), Volkerhaltender (?)

Da kam des Teufels Sohn auf Adams Brücke

und spaltete einen Stein zu Brennholz.

Da kam Adams Sohn

und schlug des Teufels Sohn zu einer Staude.

Petrus sandte Paulus, seinen Bruder, da nach Rom.

Die Adern verband er ... (?). Er trieb den Satan aus.

Also tue ich es mit dir, unreiner Atem, von diesem christlichen Leibe.

So rasch heile dieser christliche Leib,

wie rasch ich mit den Händen die Erde berühre.

Berühre hierauf die Erde mit beiden Händen und sag ein Vater unser her.

Springe danach hinüber auf die Rechte, und mit dem rechten Fuss

berühre seine (des Kranken) rechte Seite und sprich:

Steh auf! Was ist mit dir? Gott gebot es dir.

Dies mach drei Mal. Und bald wirst du sehen, dass der Kranke sich gesund erhebt.

27) In der kath. Kirche nimmt od. nahm das Latein etwa diese Rolle ein.

28) E. v. Steinmeyer, p. 380 f.

Diesmal haben wir vor und nach der ahd Beschwörung die lateinischen Anweisungen. Zum ersten Male ist auch der Erfolg der magisch-zauberischen Handlung unmittelbar angeführt, nämlich die Heilung des Kranken „et mox uidebis infirmum surgere sanum.“

Sprachlich und inhaltlich ist allerdings vielerlei unklar, wobei ein Grossteil auf Kosten der mündlichen Überlieferung bis zur schriftlichen Aufzeichnung gehen dürfte, so z.B. das merkwürdige „pontum patum“ (Hs P), das auch durch die Variante der Hs.M „frepunte den paten“ keinerlei Erhellung erfährt. „Da ze Rome“ ist eine Konjektur. Hs P, die wir hier ohne sonstige Berücksichtigung der Hs M mitteilen, gibt „da zer aderuna“, M „daz er arome“ für das Scherer „ci Rôme“ vorschlug.

Inhaltlich ist der Anfang des Spruches ebenfalls alles andere als klar, da ein Zusammenhang zwischen ihm und der Fallsucht zu fehlen scheint. Am wahrscheinlichsten ist, im Vorblick auf das spätere, dass die geschilderte Handlung zu einer Teufels- bzw. Dämonenaustreibung, denn eine solche liegt zu Grunde, gehört. Bei einer solchen geht man von der Annahme aus, dass der Kranke von einem bösen Dämon befallen sei. Die Krankheit kann nur geheilt werden, wenn man gute Gegenkräfte anbietet, also dem Menschen gut gesinnte Geister (siehe oben).

Wo nämlich der Spruch wieder verständlich wird, vernehmen wir, dass Paulus den Satan austrieb. In Analogie dazu vertreibt der Beschwörende den unreinen Atem, den er wie eine Person, offenbar als einen Dämonen, anspricht, vom Kranken, den er ausdrücklich als „christenen lichamen“ bezeichnet. In einem solchen hat die teuflische Macht ja sozusagen a priori nichts zu suchen.

Das Berühren der Erde mit beiden Händen ist so gut Kontakt-Magie wie das Berühren der rechten Seite mit dem rechten Fusse. Wir erinnern uns hier an das *Ad equum errehet*, wo gleichfalls die Rechte eine besondere Rolle spielt. Ob wir hier wohl daran denken dürfen, dass recht mit richtig, d.h. in Ordnung zusammenhängt?

Wie wir uns die Sache mit der Erdberührung vorzustellen haben, wird aus dem vorliegenden Texte nicht ganz klar. Es hilft uns da aber der Spruch *Ad uermen, qui in caballo est* aus einer vatikanischen Handschrift weiter, der, was die Zauberpraxis anbetrifft, bis ins Detail ausführlich Auskunft gibt.

Ad uermen, qui in caballo est

post solis occasum uade ubi est erba uerminatia et pone unam petram super illam et dic ter: uerminatia, libera illam bestiam — aut albam aut rubram aut qualem colorem habet — de uerne et de pena, et ego libero te de ista tam grandi pena. deinde uade ante solis ortum et iterum dic, quod superius, ter et tolle ipsam petram.

Item. erbam, que dicitur sigillata, effodies et interim, dum fodis, dic:

Christus uuart geboran, in cripa geuuorpan — her thaz blanka ros, de quocunque colore sit, nominetur et possessor eius nominetur — geuuorpan uiirdi.

pater noster canatur totum et X uicibus repetatur illud theotonicum et semper sequatur pater noster totum, cumque ultimum canitur et eius finis 'sed libera nos' dicitur, tunc cum utrisque manibus a terra abstrahitur et postea nunquam ad terram ueniat, sed caballo in fronte suspendatur, qui uermen habet, tamdiu eousque moriatur. Qui caballus ad currentem aquam non bibat nec in ulla aqua balneetur nec ullus dorso eius insideat, sed liber ab omni onere pascatur, donec omnis uermis moriatur. Qui canem hoc medicamento iuuerit, deinceps non poterit ulli animali subuenire.²⁹⁾

Zum Wurm, der in einem Pferde ist.

Nach Sonnenuntergang gehe dorthin, wo das Wurmkraut (Verbena) ist und lege einen Stein auf jenes und sprich drei Mal: Wurmkraut, befreie jenes Tier — ob es eine weisse, rote oder was immer für eine Farbe habe — vom Wurm und von Plage. Gehe dann vor Sonnenaufgang (wieder dorthin) und sprich abermals wie oben drei Mal und nimm den Stein weg.

Und weiter. Du sollst das Kraut, das man Sigillum (Salomonis) nennt, ausgraben. Inzwischen, während du gräbst, sprich:

Christ ward geboren, in eine Krippe gelegt — hier werde das weisse Ross (oder) von welcher Farbe es sonst sei, genannt und (ebenso) sein Besitzer — ... (?)

Ein vollständiges Vater unser soll gesprochen und jenes zehn Mal deutsch wiederholt werden, immer gefolgt von einem ganzen (lateinischen?) Vater unser. Wenn das letzte gesprochen und sein Schluss 'sondern löse uns' gesagt wurde, dann reisse es (das Kraut) mit beiden Händen aus der Erde. Drauf dann komme es niemals (mehr) auf die Erde (mit ihr in Berührung) und (schliesslich) hänge man es an die Stirne des Pferdes, das den Wurm hat, solange bis dieser stirbt. Das Pferd trinke nicht vom fliessenden Wasser und es soll auch in keinem Wasser gebadet werden, und keiner setze sich auf seinen Rücken, sondern es weide von aller Last frei, bis jeder Wurm abgestorben ist. Wer einem Hund mit diesem Heilmittel hilft, kann danach keinem Tiere mehr helfen.

Abermals ist sehr schön die Aufteilung zwischen Gebrauchsanweisung in lateinischer Sprache und magischem Wort in deutsch zu sehen, wobei ganz besonders die zehn deutschen Vater unser bemerkt werden wollen,

29) a.a.O. p. 371.

wird dadurch doch der heimischen Sprache, dem heimischen Klange, eine stärkere Wirkung zugeschrieben als dem fremden Latein.

Beachtung schenken wir aber vor allem dem Umstande, dass man das Heilkraut, bevor man es ausgräbt, buchstäblich unter Druck setzt, indem man einen Stein darauf legt. Dem Kraute wird eine ganze Nacht lang gezeigt, wie sehr die Krankheit auf dem Pferde lastet. Wird am Morgen nun der Stein weggenommen, so erleichtert man es von seiner Last. Das wird ihm wohlthuend erscheinen und aus Dankbarkeit, wenn man so sagen darf, auch das Pferd von seiner Krankheitslast befreien.

Wie das Gebet, die Gewinnung des Krautes und die Heilung ineinander verflochten sind, ersieht man leicht aus dem Passus „et libera nos“ und seinem Kontexte. Durch das Darübersprechen von Vater unsern wird das Kraut mit heilender göttlicher Manapotenz aufgeladen. Die Menge der zu sprechenden Vater unser redet hier eine eindeutige Sprache. Wir nennen das Magie der repetierten Formel. So gesegnet an die Stirne des Pferdes gehängt, soll es diese heilende Kraft gesunden lassen. Solche und ähnliche Praxis lässt sich bis heute in der katholischen Kirche nachweisen.

Dass das Kraut nach dem Ausreißen nicht mehr mit der Erde in Berührung kommen darf, ist wohl darin begründet, dass die gespeicherte Kraft ihm sonst von der Erde wieder entzogen würde.

Von hier blicken wir auf den vorher behandelten Spruch zurück. Wir haben dann zu verstehen, dass der Heilende mit den Händen eventuell den Körper des Kranken und dann die Erde berührt, um so die Krankheit gleichsam in die Erde abzuleiten. Kaum wahrscheinlich wäre der umgekehrte Vorgang, dass der Heilende seine Hände durch die Erdberührung mit regenerierenden Kräften auflüde, um dergestalt die Heilung zu bewirken.

Das Urzeitgeschehen, das wir gleichartig aus dem oben zuerst behandelten ahd Spruch kennen ³⁰⁾, erscheint völlig bezugslos und es hat keinerlei Sinn, sich weiter darüber Gedanken zu machen.

Hingegen gibt der letzte Satz noch zum Nachdenken Anlass.

Es scheinen Spuren von Tabu-Vorstellungen mitzuwirken. Das Tabu betrifft zwar nicht das Heilmittel, sondern offenbar den Hund, denn das Mittel kann bei allen Tieren mit Erfolg angewendet werden.

Nun wird aus dem Schlusse aber nicht klar, wie die Angelegenheit

30) Cf. p. 46.

aufgefasst werden soll. Verliert das Mittel nach der Berührung mit einem Hunde seine Kraft oder kann derjenige, der das Mittel für Hunde benutzte, überhaupt keine Tiere mehr heilen? Wohl eher das erstere. Welches allerdings der Grund dafür ist, das wissen wir nicht. Es wäre zu untersuchen, welche Rolle der Hund bezüglich magischer und zauberischer Praxis einnimmt.

Kehren wir noch einmal zum Kampf gegen Dämonen zurück. Einen Abwehrzauber hat der Spruch „*Ad signandum domum contra diabolum*“ zum Thema.

Uuola, uuiht, taz tu uueist, taz tu uuiht heizist,
Taz tu neuueist noch nechanst cheden chnospinci.³¹⁾

Wohl, Dämon, dass du weisst, dass du Dämon heissest,
dass du (aber) nicht weisst und nicht vermagst Zerschmetterung (?) (Zer-
störung?) (durch Worte) herbeizuführen.

Es geht bei diesem Zauber abermals um Nennungen. Wir haben oben von der schöpferischen Kraft des Wortes geredet, die in der Einbildungskraft als Bild hervorbringt, was das Wort besagt. Nun bleibt dieses Hervorrufen aber keineswegs auf die Einbildungskraft beschränkt, sondern hat durch magische Wirkung die Möglichkeit realiter zu entstehen. Es sei in diesem Zusammenhang an das „Enuma eliš . . .“ erinnert, dessen erste Verse lauten:

„Als droben der Himmel nicht genannt war,
Drunten die Feste einen Namen nicht trug, . . .“³²⁾

oder an das Popol Vuh, das heilige Buch der Quiché

ta xvinaquir cu ri vleu cumal. xa quitzihi, xgohe-vi v vinaquiric:
chivinaquir vleu, „vleuh!“ xecha, libahchi xvinaquiric.³³⁾

Und alsbald vollzog sich die Entstehung der Erde durch sie (die Schöpfergottheiten). Ja wahrhaftig, es vollzog sich ihre Entstehung: Auf dass die Erde entstünde, sprachen sie „Erde!“ und augenblicklich entstand sie.

Es bedeutet unser ahd Spruch etwa: Es ist gut, Dämon, dass du weisst, dass wir wissen, dass du Dämon heissest, das meint, dass wir

31) E. v. Steinmeyer, p. 389.

32) H. Gressmann, p. 109.

33) L. Schultze Jena, Popol Vuh, Stuttgart und Berlin, 1944, p. 6 u. 7.

niederlässt, so dass ich dich fangen kann, dann handelst du dem Willen Gottes gemäss und sonst nicht.

Von daher erhält abermals das „fliuc . . . heim zi comonne gisunt“, so banal und alltäglich es klingt, eine sehr viel schwerere Bedeutung, als es scheint. Rückkehr ins Kollektiv bedeutet Gesundheit, Ausbleiben Tod, denn wer sich nicht gemäss den Vorschriften verhält, die für alle Stammesmitglieder verbindlich sind, so argumentiert der Primitive, wird ausgestossen und wird im ordnungsfeindlichen Utgard zugrunde gehen. Dat gilt für Menschen wie für Tiere.

Für den Fall, dass diese Aufforderung im Namen Gottes nichts nützen sollte — und wie fern ist doch eigentlich dieser alles überschauende Gott dem Menschen — bietet der Bauer eine nähere, eindringlichere und wirksamere Instanz auf, die dem Bienenvolk zureden soll, die Jungfrau Maria.

Es ist dies ja eine geläufige Erscheinung, dass das einfache Volk nicht mit dem Hochgott direkt verkehrt, weil er zu ferne, zu entrückt ist, als dass er Bitten oder Beeinflussungen durch Opfer, magische Handlungen etc. zugänglich wäre. So wendet es sich an ihm nähere Gottheiten, die sich auf irgend eine Weise manipulieren lassen. Das waren in der Antike niedere Gottheiten, im Christentum die Heiligen und Maria.

Nur en passant sei zudem erwähnt, dass Maria über alte Vorstellungen der Grossen Mutter näheren Bezug zu den Bienen gehabt haben dürfte.

In dieselbe Kategorie einfachster Beschwörung, die uns aber das logische Denken in der Primitivsituation auf das eindrucklichste nahebringt, gehören zwei *Wurmsegen* von gleichem Wortlaut. Der erste stammt aus dem oberdeutschen Sprachbereich, der zweite aus dem niederdeutschen.

Pro nussia

Gang uz, Nesso, mit niun nessinchilinin,
uz fonna marge in deo adra, vonna den adrun in daz fleisk,
fonna demu fleiske in daz fel, fonna demo velle in diz tulli.
Ter Pater noster.³⁵⁾

Geh hinaus, Wurm, mit neun Würmchen,
hinaus aus dem Marke in die Adern, aus den Adern in das Fleisch,
aus dem Fleische in die Haut, aus der Haut in diese Pfeilspitze.
Drei Vater unser.

35) E. v. Steinmeyer, p. 374.

Contra vermes

Gang út, nesso,
mid nigon nessikilonon.

út fana themo marge an that ben, fan themo bene an that flesg,
ut fan themo flesgke an thia hud, ut fan thera hud an thesa strala.
drohtin, uuerthe so! ³⁶⁾

Geh hinaus, Wurm, mit neun Würmchen.

Hinaus aus dem Marke in den Knochen, von dem Knochen in das Fleisch
hinaus aus dem Fleische in die Haut, hinaus aus der Haut in diesen Pfeil.
Herr, lass es also geschehen!

Die beiden Sprüche, die wiederum durch eine altindische Parallel als indogerman. Erbe betrachtet werden können ³⁷⁾, bedürfen kaum einer näheren Erläuterung. Die neun kleinen Würmchen, die mit dem Wurm den Körper verlassen sollen, sind gleichsam prophylaktisch gesprochen, damit auch wirklich alles, was Wurm heisst, vernichtet wird. Nur die Quintessenz ist uns hier von Wichtigkeit: Der Wurm soll in eine Pfeilspitze übertreten. Offenbar hat diese eine magische Kraft, die den Wurm an sich zieht und unschädlich macht. Das erhellt uns eine wesentlich interessantere Stelle, die sich im *Hildebrandslied* findet. Dort heisst es:

þant her do ar arme . þuntane bauga
cheisuringu gitan . so im se der chuning gap
huneo truhtin . 'dat ih dir it nu bi huldī gibu'
hadubraht gima [ha]lta . hiltibrantes sunu
'mit geru scal man . geba infahan
ort . þidar orte' ³⁸⁾

da wand er (Hildebrant) vom Arme gewundene Ringe
mit Kaisermünzen besetzt, wie sie ihm der König gegeben,
der Hunnen Herr. 'Das will ich dir mit Huld nun geben.'
Hadubrant sprach Hildebrants Sohn:
'Mit dem Ger (nur) soll man (der Mann) eine Gabe annehmen
Spitze wider Spitze'.

Bei der Interpretation dieser Stelle wollen wir von allen bisherigen Deutungsversuchen absehen und uns allein auf den ahd Wortlaut verlassen. Hildebrant, der Vater, will seinem Sohne, der ihn nicht erkennt (oder nicht erkennen will), als Zeichen seiner lauterer Absicht ein

36) a.a.O.

37) A. Heusler, p. 58.

38) Nach Hs.

Geschenk überreichen. Es handelt sich dabei offenbar um einen wertvollen, dem Vater teuren Armschmuck, hat er ihn doch als Auszeichnung vom König erhalten. Hadubrant aber befürchtet Hinterlist.

‘du bist dir alter hun . ummet spaher
spenis mih mit dinem þortun . þili mih dinu speru werpan’

‘Du bist ein alter Hunne, ein überaus kluger (verschlagerener).
Du lockst mich mit deinen Worten (und) willst mich (dabei) mit dem
Speere (zu Tode) werfen.’

Deshalb fordert er:

‘mit geru scal man . geba infahan
ort . þidar orte’

Wir haben keinerlei Grund die geschilderte Szene anders aufzufassen als wortwörtlich, wie im Hildebrants-Lied überhaupt alles wörtlich zu nehmen ist und nirgends etwa übertragene Bedeutung vermutet werden muss. Demnach soll die Übergabe des Geschenks auf folgende Art stattfinden. Hildebrant soll den Armschmuck auf die Spitze des Speeres hängen und sie Hadubrant entgegenstrecken. Hadubrant seinerseits wird ihn dann mit seiner Speerspitze übernehmen, eben Spitze wider Spitze.

Das scheint recht umständlich zu sein, hat aber seinen Sinn. Was befürchtet Hadubrant eigentlich? Es ist ursprünglich kaum der von ihm genannte Grund, Hildebrant würde ihm den Speer bei der Übernahme des Geschenkes in die Brust stossen. Sollte Hadubrant den tiefsten Grund selber nicht mehr wissen und einen Handlungsvollzug verlangen, der einfach Brauch geworden war? Schon möglich. Der Spitze-wider-Spitze-Ritus ist ein Abwehrzauber gegen Kontaktmagie. Wenn Hildebrant Hadubrant ein Geschenk überreicht, so haftet an diesem Manapotenz des Gebers. Diese kann unter Umständen dem Empfänger schaden. Die Speerspitze bannt schädliche Einflüsse. Bedenken wir hierbei, dass die Kraft von Speerspitzen oft durch Runenritzungen erhöht wurde. Überreicht man das Geschenk Spitze wider Spitze, so wird das Fremdmana, das schädlich wirken könnte, in die Speerspitze abgeleitet ³⁹⁾.

Auf diese Weise könnte Hadubrant gefahrlos das Geschenk über-

³⁹⁾ Ob die Vorstellung etwa darauf beruhte, dass man den Magnetismus des Eisens kannte, bleibe dahingestellt.

nehmen. Aus welchen Gründen schliesslich die Übergabe dennoch unterbleibt, erzählt uns das Heldenlied nicht. Die nachfolgenden Worte Hadubrants sind zu beleidigend, als dass eine friedliche Einigung noch möglich wäre.

Diese Skizzierung der ahd Zaubersprüche zeigt deutlich, wie problematisch es ist, nach ihren altgermanischen oder christlichen Wurzeln zu forschen. Gewisse mythologische Bezüge knüpfen hier wie dort an, sind oft aber auch nur umgedeutet. Ihrem Wesen nach sind die magischen Sprüche aber gleich, ihre Wirkung beruht auf denselben Grundvorstellungen und auf demselben Weltbilde. Namen, die die Sprüche bald dem christlichen, bald dem germanischen Bereiche zuzuweisen scheinen, tun nicht das geringste zur Sache. Christus oder Wotan, Freia oder Maria, Phol oder ein Heiliger, da ist kein Unterschied; es sind Bezeichnungen von Kraftträgern, die man sich geneigt machen will, von denen man sich Hilfe erhofft. Das Weltbild selbst wird davon kaum tangiert. In diesem Sinne sind alle ahd Zaubersprüche als germanisch zu bezeichnen, stammen sie doch aus diesem Kulturkreis, sind durch dieses Klima bedingt und konnten nur hier diese Form annehmen. Christliche Züge sind auf jeden Fall sekundär. Das heisst nicht, dass in christlicher Zeit nicht neue Zaubersprüche geschaffen worden seien, aber sie wurden es aufgrund germanischer Vorbilder und germanischer Eigenart.

ON WORDS AND MEANING:
THE ATTITUDE TOWARD DISCOURSE
IN THE LAṆKĀVATĀRA SŪTRA

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Most of the scholarly work which has been produced addressing the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra has issued from D. T. Suzuki, notably in the introduction to his translation,¹⁾ in his *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, and in *On Indian Mahayana Buddhism*. In these works, Suzuki presents a systematic ontology which he takes to be the teaching of the sutra.²⁾ But in reading the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra one comes across many apparent contradictions in the teaching. A positive statement which is presented for acceptance in one context may be explicitly denied in

1) Published by Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1932. All references to the text are taken from this translation. Subsequently, all such references will be followed by the page numbers from this translation in parentheses. The introduction to this translation, though this paper contends it to be overly concerned with consistent ontology, is a valuable preliminary overview of the sutra, including historical and chronological notes. The *Studies*, published by George Routledge and Sons, London, 1930, is an exhaustive presentation of the same viewpoint. The article in *On Indian Mahayana Buddhism* (Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1968), titled "The Breadth of Mahayana Buddhism and the Teaching of the Lankavatara," attempts to relate the teachings of the Laṅkāvatāra to other Mahayana texts.

2) The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra is often associated with the Yogacara school of Mahayana Buddhism, which taught the doctrine of "mind-only." While Suzuki's interpretation should be seen in the light of his Zen outlook, he finds a similar monistic ontology. Various terms in the text are taken as signals of the highest reality: *cittamātra* (mind-only), *tathatā* (suchness), *pūrvadharmasthititā* (existing since the very first), *viviktadharma* (a thing of solitude), *bhūtakōṭi* (limit of reality), etc. The bulk of the sutra's apparent teaching deals with the evolution and sustenance of the perception of the objective world, a perception which the sutra takes to be false. The sutra speaks of the *ālayavijñāna* (store-consciousness) which is aroused by the action of the *vijñānas* (organs of discernment) under the influence of habit-energy and false imagination. This system is much too complex to be treated here, but one should refer to the introduction to Suzuki's translation for a full explication.

another context, or both assertion and denial may be negated by a passage denying the specific statements or the applicability of all statements in general. An attempt to describe the teachings of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* on any topic is complicated by this ambivalent nature of the teaching.

It would seem, then, that any attempt to systematize the ontological stance of the text is impossible on the practical level. But it may be contended that such an attempt is also a misunderstanding of the point of the text. This paper contends that a more fruitful approach to the *sūtra* is an analysis of its attitude toward and use of words and discourse in general rather than an understanding of specific ontological teachings. This study is not free of the problems of contradiction that have been mentioned but since the contradiction is expressed in the use of words, the attitude toward the use of words as indicated in the text should help to clarify the purposes of the contradictory approach and perhaps simplify any study of particular teachings of the *sūtra*.

The thesis of this paper is that the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* sees the use of words in the form of discourse as a practical tool to direct the reader toward an experience to which the application of words is impossible, the internal realization of the truth. The *sūtra* seeks to use words as a lever to detach individuals from attachment to the world by meeting certain problems in the minds of its ignorant readers and to destroy erroneous views which block realization. It seeks to drive the reader to the level on which he may become conversant with meaning rather than words.

The paper shall establish the nature of words according to the *sūtra*, the problems and evils which arise from the use of words in discourse, the assertions of the *sūtra* about the usefulness and even the necessity of discourse on the part of the Enlightened Ones, and finally a discussion of the level of meaning and its applicability to the teachings of the *sūtra*.

The Nature of Words

The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* makes several specific assertions about the nature of words. Basically, words are evolved and used only on the level of discrimination, and have discrimination for a cause (76-77). Discrimination of words is said to be of four kinds: 1) words denoting individual marks; 2) dream-words; 3) words growing out of attach-

ments to erroneous speculations and discriminations; and 4) words growing out of the discrimination that knows no beginning. In each case, the use of words is an expression of, illustration of, and attachment to, discrimination (75-110).

Although ignorant individuals imagine that the origin of words depends upon the subjects which they express, the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* denies this. The objects so named by the ignorant are mere appearances which only have existence in that they are discriminated (195). The sutra declares the discrimination of words to be false imagination along with the discrimination of all dualistic concepts and notions. The attachment to this false imagination on the part of the ignorant gives rise to the discrimination of an external world of objects which appear to be real. Since this external world only has existence in the discrimination, it is said to be unreal. Hence, words as a result and illustration of discrimination are unreal, along with the objects which they are supposed to indicate (77).

Words seem to have an important part to play in the process of discrimination, as is indicated in this statement: "In all things there is no self-nature, they are mere words of people" (77). Somehow, the process of naming the apparent objects is bound up with the whole scheme of discrimination. At one point discrimination is defined as that by which names are declared (195). Thus, words are not only an accompanying feature of discrimination, they are essential to it.

As an integral part of the discriminatory process, words are not only unreal, they are a cause of bondage. Discrimination is a self-renewing process in that it moves in circular relationship with habit-energy, the impetus for discrimination.³⁾ In a process which is described as continuing from beginningless time, discrimination yields habit-energy, which yields more discrimination under the influence of false imagination. This process blocks the ignorant from the realization of the unreal nature of the external world, and the truth of Mind-only. It insures instead the continued appearance of the external world (34). In the unreal world of thought-construction and name the ignorant beings suffer because of their grasping of dualism. Hence, the process

3) The nature of habit-energy is not clear in the text, except that it knows no beginning and that it is the motivating force for the continuation of the discriminatory process.

of discrimination produces a bondage to suffering (36). In relation to our particular subject this is expressed clearly in the statement that "discoursing is a source of suffering in the triple world" (161).

Because of this assertion, the discourses and views of philosophers ⁴⁾ are a prime target of the criticism of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, since they are seen as barriers to self-realization and productive of attachment to the unreal world of objects with its accompanying suffering. These attacks even go to the extreme of the assertion that "those who following words, discriminate and assert various notions, are bound to hell for their assertions" (135). Liberation is set in terms of the ending of discrimination, the disappearance of the objective world, the ending of erroneous views, the elimination of habit-energy, and so forth (34, 238, etc.).

Thus far it would seem clear that words and discourses are, by their nature, liabilities to be avoided since they produce unreality, bondage, and suffering. And yet the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, which makes all of these claims about the nature of words, is itself a discourse. Having denied the merits of assertion and refutation, it pursues them. How then is it any different than the *Lokāyatika* ⁵⁾ who puts the minds of the ignorant into utter confusion by means of words and phrases? Its use of words seems, in accompaniment with its denial of any corresponding reality, similar to the nonsensical statement, "I am lying." In what sense are we to take such words as *Nirvana*, transcendental knowledge, *Ālayavijñāna*, and *Cittamātra* if words are unreal?

The text explicitly states that, while the teaching of the sutra aims at the highest reality, "words are not the highest reality, nor is what is expressed in words the highest reality" (77), and "that which is beyond all measure is not expressible in words" (163). Words, being dualistic thought-constructions arising from discrimination, are subject to birth and death, but,

4) It is not clear in the text who these philosophers are, but the refutations of their positions suggest that most of them were realists. In each case they are teachers who present a particular view of the nature of reality which they propose as a reflection of truth.

5) The *Lokāyatika* may refer to members of a materialist sect known as the *Cārvākas*. The text states that they were experts in the art of eloquence and who, through their arguments, caused confusion in the minds of their listeners.

of neither existence nor non-existence do I speak, but of the Mind-only, which has nothing to do with existence and non-existence, and which is thus free from intellection, . . . (133).

The Lankāvatāra Sūtra claims to use words to indicate something that cannot be indicated with words, while openly admitting that words, being of the realm of language, can only misrepresent the truth (240). And if these statements were not enough to establish the futility of words in any attempt to indicate the highest reality, the sutra goes on to say that there are available to language no analogies which convey the truth (199).

The Usefulness of Words

In the midst of these clear denials of the applicability of words, one may read assertions of the usefulness, even the necessity of words. The use of words serves several purposes.

First, such teachings meet the reader on the level of his mentality: "I discourse with the ignorant" (44, 149). For those who are addicted to discrimination, no other approach is possible.

Second, discourses speak to specific problems arising from attachment to discrimination. As an example, the truth of solitude and the existence of the Tathāgata-garbha ⁶) are presented because the ignorant are frightened by the idea of the egolessness of things (143). Analogies, such as the comparison of the Ālayavijñāna to an ocean, are given in order to be in accord with the experience of the listeners (43).

Third, by entering the realm of assertion and refutation the discourses and erroneous views of the philosophers may be destroyed. The statement that "philosophical statements are definite, but the Mahayana is not definite" (239) expresses the nature of this practical approach. This approach may be illustrated throughout the sutra, and takes basically two forms. The first is the assertion of the position opposite of that of the philosophers. In following this plan, the sutra may be seen as consistent, even while asserting conflicting views at various points. If the philosophers assert a nihilistic position, the Lankāvatāra will assert that all things exist, and to counter realism it will assert that all things are unreal (35). If people have the idea

6) These are pedagogical devices which appear to give positive content to egolessness by the portrayal of egolessness as a state or condition.

of the self-nature of things, the sutra asserts that all things have the self-nature of Māyā ⁷⁾ (97). If the philosopher points then to Māyā as a cause, the self-nature of Māyā may be denied. The second form is simply to deny the applicability of all assertions, which not only defeats the philosophers, but also avoids the dangers of attachment to any of the views which are apparently asserted by the sutra elsewhere. Here the truth is declared to be beyond the grasp of any dualism. When erroneous views are defeated, including the rejection of assertion and refutation, then the objective world, which depends on these faulty speculations, no longer rises, and suchness ⁸⁾ is established.

Fourth, discourse is a necessity in that it insures the continuation of the teaching of truth and the availability of liberation. If the truth is not declared, the scriptures will disappear, and there will be no more Buddhas, Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Bodhisattvas to teach the message to others, making liberation impossible (167). ⁹⁾ (The text asks, "Who will teach, and to whom?", which seems to be a valid question of general applicability, given the rejection of dualism.)

In addition to establishing the usefulness of discourse, it is also possible to minimize the liabilities. This is accomplished by several methods.

First, the reader is reminded several times that the teachings of the Buddhas are wholly discrimination and are given for the purpose of removing bondage to Citta, Manas, and Manovijñāna, ¹⁰⁾ not for

7) *Māyā* is often translated "illusion," but may also be seen as the power through which the world appears to exist.

8) Suchness (*tathatā*) is a term which attempts to avoid positing any substance to ultimate reality or provide any description. It asserts that reality simply is such as it is.

9) Śrāvakas are generally accepted to be the so-called "Hinayanists" or "disciples," the early Buddhists now represented by the Theravada school of South Asia. The Pratyekabuddhas have not been identified as any particular school although the name suggests that they were a hermit order. A Bodhisattva is one who postpones his own enlightenment for the purpose of saving all beings from bondage. The *Laṅkā* is critical of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas because they are concerned only with individual salvation, not the universal compassion of the Bodhisattva. Since the *Laṅkā* denies the reality of individuality, salvation conceived as an individual achievement must be viewed as an inferior attainment. Still, their teachings are seen as legitimate to a certain degree and their attainments are positive though not complete.

10) These three terms refer to the various mental faculties.

the attainment and establishment of self-realization, which can come only from inner attainment (168).

Second, discourse is shown to be a limited activity of the Enlightened Ones. Words are not used in the various Buddha lands ¹¹⁾ due to the fact that they are an artificial creation (91). Also it is stated that discriminative discourse is an activity of the Buddhas of Transformation (those who have taken on various forms for the purpose of teaching others) but not the Buddhas of Maturity (237). Hence, discourse is taken on by the Buddhas for the specific purpose of leading others to salvation, not because it is part of the nature of Buddhahood.

Third, the nature of the Bodhisattvas as performers of non-effect producing works means that their discourses need not be productive of habit-energy and more discrimination. ¹²⁾

Fourth, one encounters the statement that Buddhas and Bodhisattvas do not utter or answer a letter, which again forcefully asserts that words do not apply to their experience of non-duality (167).

Fifth, there is a distinction made between the truth and the teaching about the truth. The sutra states that there are two forms of teaching, discourse and the establishment of self-realization (149 and 128).

This process, in which discrimination is used to defeat discrimination and in which the use of words and discourse is not productive of attachment is called *upāya*, "skillful means." ¹³⁾ The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, to be properly understood, must be appreciated in the light of this concept. Its purpose is not to establish a new and truthful ontology, but rather to free the ignorantly attached people of the world from all discrimination and ontological speculation.

11) The Buddha-lands are dwelling places of Buddhas, created through their might. The Dharma (true teaching) is correctly expounded there, and beings may be reborn there into an atmosphere where the truth may be pursued without the impediments of earthly life.

12) Since the process of discrimination maintains the apparent dualistic world, the fact that the Bodhisattvas do not themselves discriminate, even while discoursing, means that they do not contribute to falsehood.

13) *Upāya*, literally translated, means "well-going," indicating in its usage here the quality of action which leads to emancipation. The accomplishment of emancipation is achieved by the Bodhisattva who uses dualism to defeat the attachment to dualism. The Bodhisattva can appear to discriminate for the purpose of instructing deluded individuals, but actually they are unattached to and unaffected by that apparent discrimination.

The Category of Meaning

What is it which is accomplished when discourse is presented to counter discrimination and the erroneous views of the philosophers? As we have seen, discourse with words is both dangerous and necessary.

(The Truth) is told differently discriminated in the different sutras because of names and notions; (yet) apart from words no meaning is obtainable. (161).

It is the nature of words that they cannot indicate the highest reality and yet discovery of the truth is not possible without them. The crucial element in the quotation seems to be the category of meaning. The word "meaning" is used in the phrase much as one would use the name of an objective referent. But in this case it is a conventional term to designate the objectlessness which is the goal of self-realization while not itself constituting that self-realization. This is in harmony with the distinction between truth and the teaching about truth. The same term is used in the paradoxical phrase which accompanies the assertion that the Buddhas utter not a letter. This accompanying statement asserts that the Enlightened Ones teach what is in conformity with meaning (167). In *upāya*, the teachings of the Tathāgatas point to something beyond the things to which words can point. Hence it can be stated that there are "authoritative teachings in which there are no discriminations" (115).

The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra gives us some indications about the nature of meaning. We are told that words and meaning are neither different nor non-different in that meaning is revealed by words as an object is illuminated by a lamp. In another sense, meaning is spoken of as freed from existence and non-existence while words are subject to birth and death. Meaning can only be indicated by words but words are not identical to it (166-167). This seems to be closer to what is called the deeper sense or hidden meaning (124 and 208). This is the meaning which is alone with itself and is the cause of Nirvana (189).

It is this sense of meaning which distinguishes the purpose of the discourse of the Buddhas from the error of the ignorant who follow the mere words as expressed in the texts (166). The Buddhas advise the reader to "be in conformity with the sense and be not engrossed

in the word-teaching" (68). Hence, the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva is described as:

...endowed with subtle, fine, and penetrating thought power and whose understanding is in accordance with the meaning. (193).

There are, corresponding with words, various thought constructions that are of the nature of discrimination and therefore unreal. These thought constructions must be avoided so that the meaning can be apprehended. So it is expressed that "there is the highest Ālayavijñāna and again there is the Ālayavijñāna as thought construction" (231). Texts deviate from the truth due to the nature of words, but the usefulness of a text is not that it establishes an accurate or consistent doctrine of the truth, but that it ends the bondage to discrimination so that the inner truth of self-realization may be pursued. Discourse can deal only with the problems of its own level, such as the attachments which result from discrimination and the erroneous views of the philosophers (68, 167, etc.). But this practical leverage can point to meaning.

To make this point, the text develops the analogy of the pointing finger-tip, advising all against becoming attached to the finger. Similarly the analogy of a painting is used in which it is pointed out that the picture cannot be said to be present in the colors, canvas, or plate (169, 43-44).

While it is stated that meaning is alone with itself and is the cause of Nirvana, the text clearly denies that simple understanding of the text can bring liberation. Recalling the distinction between the truth and the teaching about it, meaning indicated by the finger-tip of the text itself implies the necessity of the accomplishment of an inner self-realization to transcend duality. All that discourse can achieve is the denial of the applicability of dualism.

The *upāya* of the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra is illustrated by the following discourse-toward-meaning. In the sutra one may read the statement:

...all things are here essentially because of our attachment to the habit-energy of discrimination which has been maturing since beginningless time on account of false imagination and erroneous speculation. (72).

Here we encounter a statement which makes positive assertions concerning the evolution of the external world, the agencies of this evolution, and the conditions of its maintenance. But each of these assertions are negated in the text:

- ... **discrimination does not evolve nor is it put away.** (131).
- ...well pondered with intelligence there is neither relativity nor false imagination. (114).
- ...there is neither objectivity nor its appearance. (193).
- ...there is neither seizing nor seized, neither bound nor binding. (228).

Further, when everything is denied, there can follow a monistic assertion:

Mind is all, it is found everywhere and in every body. (236).

And if this is not enough both can be asserted:

...things are not as they are seen nor are they otherwise. (135).

The result of this conglomeration of contradictory assertions is that no positive content can be attributed to the teaching, but all dualistic conceptions are denied as having applicability. Words prove themselves incapable of the task, so the reader is directed beyond words and their dualistic nature. In the final analysis the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* does not make ontological claims by use of discourse, it only disclaims, finally disclaiming itself as capable of delivering the individual to the state of self-realization. The best it can do is to remove some of the road-blocks.

Conclusions

The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* defies systematization by its approach to the promotion of liberation. All of its statements must be understood in terms of *upāya*, its practical approach to the nature of truth in which it realizes the impossibility of indicating that nature. Its point is not to establish a correct and consistent doctrine, but to direct the reader away from all duality toward a goal which can be realized only internally, consistent with the realization of meaning.

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE
OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE HISTORY
OF RELIGION
AND THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF RELIGION

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I

This paper sets out to examine the basis on which the History of Religion and the Phenomenology of Religion could be distinguished from each other. These two terms, however, mean different things to different scholars and it seems desirable to clarify at the very outset the specific sense in which these two terms will be used in this paper.

The expression 'History of Religion' has been used in at least three senses: it has been used in a narrow sense, in a broader sense and in the broadest sense. In its narrow sense the expression is used to allude to "the history of individual religions, envisaged in their historical settings and chronological order".¹⁾ In its broader sense the expression 'History of Religion' includes History of Religion in its narrow sense as well as the Phenomenology of Religion; it refers to "a combination of historical studies and phenomenological studies".²⁾ In its broadest sense the English expression 'History of Religion' is used as a synonym for the German word *Religionswissenschaft* and includes "not only history properly speaking but also the comparative study of religions and religious morphology and phenomenology".³⁾

The expression 'Phenomenology of Religion' has similarly been

1) Edward J. Jurji, *The Phenomenology of Religion*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963, p. 9.

2) Frederick J. Streng, 'What does History Mean in the 'History of Religions'', *Anglican Theological Review*, 1968, p. 3.

3) Mircea Eliade, *The Quest*, University of Chicago Press, 1969, p. 1, fn. 1. Also see Joseph M. Kitagawa, 'The History of Religions in America', in Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitagawa, eds., *The History of Religions*, Chicago Press, 1959, p. 19.

used in different senses. 4) The sense in which it is more often used relates to the application of the *Epoche* and the *eidetic vision* to the study of similar phenomena in religions. 5) This may be called its narrower connotation, to distinguish it from the broader connotation it is in the process of acquiring, namely, the application of the *Epoche* and the *eidetic vision* to the study of not only similar but all religious phenomena, including the "understanding of a single phenomenon (and not necessarily comparable phenomena) within a single tradition". 6)

In this paper the expressions 'History of Religion' and 'Phenomenology of Religion' will both be used in their narrow senses (unless otherwise stated).

II

Now ever since its inception, the Phenomenology of Religion has been concerned quite self-consciously with its distinctness from such adjacent fields as the History of Religion, the Philosophy of Religion, the Psychology of Religion, etc., and these allied sciences have been similarly concerned with their distinctiveness from the Phenomenology of Religion. 7) Although scholars are not quite agreed as to what the lines of demarcation exactly are, 8) they are all agreed that the Pheno-

4) It should be noted that Phenomenology of Religion is sometimes confused with "the well-known philosophy of Husserl and his disciples which bears the same name and from which it differs totally" (see C. J. Bleeker, *The relation of the History of Religions to the kindred religious Sciences, particularly Theology, Sociology of Religion, Psychology of Religion and Phenomenology of Religion*, *Numen* I, p. 147.

5) See W. B. Kristensen, *The Meaning of Religion*, The Hague: Martins Nijhoff, 1960, p. 7, 418; G. Van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, Vol. II, New York: Harper and Row, 1963, p. 671-678, etc.

6) See J. B. Carman, *Phenomenology of Religion*, *Research Bulletin for the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy*, Benares Hindu University, Winter 1968, p. 114.

7) See W. B. Kristensen, *op. cit.*, p. 8-10, 418, etc., and G. Van der Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 685-689, etc.

8) For instance, an investigation into the essence of Religion properly belongs to the domain of the Philosophy of Religion according to Kristensen who remarks: "That which is really essential is shown by philosophical investigation. Essence is a philosophical concept and it is the chief task of the Philosophy of Religion to formulate that essence" (*op. cit.*, p. 9). Mircea Eliade, on the other hand, regards this investigation into the essence as an aspect of the History of Religion, unlike Kristensen. See *The Sacred and the Profane*, *op. cit.*, p. 232. Even though in this case the differences could be verbal, at least in part, these statements indicate the kind of "border problem" Phenomenology of Religion is

menology of Religion, though related to other kinds of Study of Religion,⁹⁾ is distinct and stands by itself.¹⁰⁾

Phenomenologists and Historians of Religion have thus been concerned with this issue of the relationship of the Phenomenology of Religion with the History of Religion right from the beginning. One of the first phenomenologists of note who addressed himself to this issue is W. Brede Kristensen. Kristensen, however, seems to look at the question not so much as an issue in itself but as part of a broader pattern of relationship between the History of Religion, the Phenomenology of Religion and the Philosophy of Religion.¹¹⁾ Even

involved in. Thus Joseph M. Kitagawa points out how Joachim Wach rejected the "oft repeated misconception that the task of the historian of religion is the study of non-Christian faiths while the theologian is concerned with what one ought to believe" (Joachim Wach, *op. cit.*, p. xxxviii). So here we hear the rumblings of another "border problem", this time with Theology, as there was one with philosophy earlier. And different scholars choose to demarcate the frontier differently.

Similarly, whereas Kristensen (*op. cit.*, p. 9) tends to distinguish between the History, the Phenomenology and the Philosophy of Religion on the basis of their correspondence with data-collection, data-classification and the search for the essence of data and evaluation thereof respectively (*op. cit.*, p. 418), according to Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Wach did *not* think of the new constructive solution for the study of religions as a simple division of labour among the various disciplines such as gathering and registering of facts and phenomena by the historian of religions and an evaluation by the theologian and the philosopher" (Joachim Wach, *op. cit.*, p. xlv-xlv; emphasis added). One more example of this border problem may be added. For G. Van der Leeuw theology is incompatible with phenomenology (*op. cit.*, p. 687-688) but Wach (in *General Revelation and Religions of the World, Journal of Bible and Religion*, April 1954) "as a phenomenologist" distinguishes between "a genuine and a non-genuine revelatory experience" as pointed out by Joseph M. Kitagawa (Joachim Wach, *op. cit.*, p. xlv). This step, however, involving an effort to distinguish between genuine and spurious religions experience is seen as a logical development in the phenomenological context by C. J. Bleeker, who remarks that "Phenomenology must begin by accepting as proper objects of study all phenomena that are professed to be religious; subsequently may come the attempt to distinguish what is genuinely religious from the spurious" (*op. cit.*, p. 148). Whether, when one takes that step one also steps *out* of Phenomenology has to be examined too.

9) For a survey of the growth of the Study of Religion, see Jan de Vries, *The Study of Religion*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967.

10) See Raffaele Pettazzoni, *Essays on the History of Religions*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954, p. 217, *passim*; The Supreme Being: Phenomenological Structure and Historical Development in Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitagawa, *op. cit.*, p. 59-66, *passim*, etc.

11) "None of the three is independent; the value and accuracy of the results of one of them depend on the value and accuracy of the results of the other two.

here he has more to say on the distinction between Phenomenology of Religion and Philosophy of Religion; ¹²⁾ and between both the History and Phenomenology of Religion on the one hand and Philosophy of Religion on the other, ¹³⁾ than between History of Religion and Phenomenology of Religion.

When Kristensen does address himself to the relationship of the History of Religion with the Phenomenology of Religion he emphasizes their mutual relation ¹⁴⁾ and the fact that Phenomenology works with data supplied by the History of Religion. ¹⁵⁾

Thus two features about Kristensen's treatment of Phenomenology of Religion vis-a-vis History of Religion attract attention: (1) that he is more concerned with their mutual dependence than with their mutual distinction and (2) the distinction which he does suggest relates to the directional flow of data rather than to a difference of method. In other words the difference rests on datal flow rather than methodological analysis and even here the difference is not to be considered as significant as mutual dependence.

The place which the research of phenomenology occupies between history and philosophy makes it extraordinarily interesting and important. The particular and the universal interpenetrate again and again; Phenomenology is at once systematic History of Religion and applied Philosophy of Religion" (W. B. Kristensen, *op. cit.*, p. 9).

12) Thus Hendrik Kraemer, "Kristensen was quite conscious of the relation that exists between Phenomenology and Philosophy of Religion" (W. B. Kristensen, *op. cit.*, p. xxiii). Also see *Ibid.*, p. 418, etc.

13) "History of Religion and Phenomenology do not have as their object the formulation of our conception of the essence of religious data. This is the task of philosopher" (*Ibid.*, p. 13).

14) "The relationship between history and phenomenology thus becomes clear. The one assumes the presence of the other and vice versa." (W. B. Kristensen, *op. cit.*, p. 8). "Phenomenology of Religion and History of Religion also stand in the same mutual relation. Naturally History provides material for the research of Phenomenology but the reverse is also true." (*Ibid.*, p. 9).

15) "Phenomenology of Religion is the comparative study of the history of religion" (*Ibid.*, p. 418). According to Hendrik Kraemer, Kristensen defines Phenomenology as "the systematically pursued comparative endeavour to interpret and understand (not explain) religious phenomena of the same category (sacrifice, prayer, sacraments, etc.) appearing in different religions to get at their inner meaning" (*Ibid.*, p. xxi). Such an exercise involves classification which presupposes observation or the presence of historical data (*Ibid.*, p. 418, *passim*). Thus if historical data is like delivered mail, Phenomenology is the sorting box so to say. This sorted out material Phenomenology can *then* make available back to the History of Religion. A Phenomenology of Religion presupposes a History of Religion for Kristensen.

G. Van der Leeuw is the next major phenomenologist who can be seen as addressing himself to the question. G. Van der Leeuw accepts the mutual dependence of the two disciplines pointed out by W. B. Kristensen but is prepared, it seems, to go further than Kristensen to distinguish between the two. After recognizing their mutual dependence,¹⁶⁾ he adds: "Nevertheless the historian's task is essentially different from the phenomenologist's and pursues other aims."¹⁷⁾

Thus while Kristensen stopped with pointing out that History of Religion provides the factual inputs for the classificatory schema of Phenomenology, G. Van der Leeuw moves a little further and seeks to distinguish between the two fields on the basis of the different goals they pursue. The goal of the historian is to establish "what actually happened and in this he can never succeed unless he understands. But also, when he fails to understand, he must describe what he has found, even if he remains at the stage of mere cataloguing. But when the phenomenologist ceases to comprehend he can have no more to say."¹⁸⁾

Thus whereas Kristensen tried to see the difference between the History of Religion and the Phenomenology of Religion in terms of the direction of the flow of data, Van der Leeuw sought the distinction not only at the level of classification of facts but also at the level of comprehension of facts. And furthermore, if the Historian too cannot really describe unless he understands what actually happened,¹⁹⁾ then the distinction between the History of Religion and the Phenomenology of Religion must rather be sought not in the *fact* of comprehension²⁰⁾ (that one comprehends or understands and the other

16) "History, certainly, cannot utter one word without adopting some phenomenological viewpoint; even a translating or the editing of a text cannot be completed without hermeneutics. On the other hand, the phenomenologist can work only with historical material since he must know what documents are available and what their character is before he can undertake their interpretation. The historian and the phenomenologist, therefore, work in the closest possible association..." (G. Van der Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 686).

17) *Ibid.* G. Van der Leeuw indeed states categorically that "the phenomenology of religion is *not* the history of religion" (*Ibid.*, emphasis added).

18) G. Van der Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 686.

19) "For the historian, everything is directed first of all to what actually happened; and in this he can never succeed unless he understands" (G. Van der Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 686).

20) It should be noted, however, that while Van der Leeuw does regard understanding as essential for the historian's success, he does not record it as

does not) but in the differences in the *quality* of comprehension or understanding.

This survey up to this point thus leads to the conclusion that the distinction between History of Religion and Phenomenology of Religion could turn on (1) the collection, classification or flow of facts, as Kristensen suggests or (2) on the fact of their comprehension or understanding as Van der Leeuw hints or (3) rather on the *quality* of the comprehension or understanding of these facts.

The next scholar one may now turn to is Mircea Eliade. He has addressed himself to the issue involved here and what is more, he seems to identify the quality of comprehension or understanding which distinguishes the historian from the phenomenologist. We are thus enabled to carry the dialectic forward.

The type of understanding which the phenomenologist seeks is one which, according to Mircea Eliade concentrates "primarily on the characteristic *structures* of religious phenomena." It seeks to "understand the *essence of religion*." ²¹)

The historian of religion, on the other hand "is concerned with religio-historical facts which he seeks to understand and to make intelligible to others. He is attracted to both the *meaning* of a religious phenomenon and to its *history*; he tries to do justice to both and not to sacrifice either one of them. Of course, the historian of religion also is led to systematize the results of his findings and to reflect on the structure of the religious phenomena. *But then he completes his historical work as phenomenologist or philosopher of religion.*" ²²)

Elsewhere too Mircea Eliade shows an awareness of the distinction to be drawn between the History of Religion and the Phenomenology of Religion when he remarks that under "phenomenologists" are to

essential for his task which could as well be "mere cataloguing" (*Ibid.*). Even when he points out how this understanding is essential for his success he qualifies it by saying that the *primary* concern of the historian ("first of all") is with *facts* ("what actually happened"). It is assumed, however, that G. Van der Leeuw would want a historian not just to be a historian but a good and "successful" historian, for which understanding is imperative. According to Kristensen too the "historian seeks to understand" (*op. cit.*, p. 7).

21) Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, New York; Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1959. p. 232.

22) Mircea Eliade, *Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism in Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitagawa*, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 88, emphasis added.

be included "those scholars who pursue the study of structures and meanings" and under "history" those "who seek to understand religious phenomena in their historical context."²³⁾ Then he adds, "Actually the divergences between these two approaches are more marked."²⁴⁾

But though an irreducible tension between these two is recognised,²⁵⁾ the differences between the two are not explored further. Instead it is the inter-relatedness of the History of Religion and the Phenomenology of Religion which captures Eliade's concern. And this is so for him whether one looks at the present,²⁶⁾ the recent past or the future of religious studies.

And it is this concern of Eliade's not only with the complementary nature of the two fields of the History of Religion and Phenomenology of Religion but of all the branches of the Study of Religion which has led to a semantic accretion in the term History of Religion.

Next, in Joachim Wach we find again a similar and now familiar pattern: a recognition of the distinction between History of Religion and Phenomenology of Religion,²⁷⁾ an emphasis on their complementarity²⁸⁾ and a tendency to subsume both of them under the general rubric History of Religion in its broader connotation.²⁹⁾ Thus, Wach, like Eliade would feel shorn if pigeon-holed as a 'phenomenologist' but would gladly accede to being a Historian of Religion in the broadest sense.

III

Such is the historical background of the issue we are concerned with³⁰⁾ — and the contemporary mood on the subject.³¹⁾

23) Mircea Eliade, *The Quest*, *op. cit.*, p. 8, fn. 7.

24) *Ibid.*

25) *Ibid.*, p. 36.

26) See *The Sacred and the Profane*, *op. cit.*, p. 232; *The Quest*, *op. cit.*, p. 8, etc.

27) Joachim Wach, *The Comparative Study of Religions*, *op. cit.*, p. 24-26. "Neither history nor psychology can do the job of phenomenology" etc.

28) *Ibid.* Thus in Phenomenology "a necessary supplement to a purely historical psychological or sociological approach is provided" (*Ibid.*, p. 24).

29) Joachim Wach, *Types of Religious Experience Christian and non-Christian*. University of Chicago Press, 1957, Chapter I, *passim*.

30) In the course of the survey just completed three main approaches towards the issue were encountered. One of these relied on the direction flow of facts. The second one relied on the fact of understanding. The third one took up the question of the quality of understanding. Of these three, the last alone survives critical analysis. For facts can be gathered *either* in chronological slots *or* in

It is now proposed to carry on this engagement with the question by analyzing how the same topic or motif is treated by a Phenomenologist of Religion and a Historian of Religion.³²⁾ Such an exercise will hopefully at least serve to clarify the issues even if it does not offer a solution.

One of the topics under which data has been assembled by phenomenologists is the Saviour motif.³³⁾ And one of the scholars who has treated of this topic is G. Van der Leeuw in whom "phenomenology of religion had its first authoritative representative."³⁴⁾ To provide the discussion with a still more specific focus let two well-known Saviour figures in the history and phenomenology of religion — Osiris and Christ³⁵⁾ — be selected to review the manner in which they are handled by a phenomenologist, and then by a historian.

topical slots, at least in the context of the present state of the Study of Religion. Thus modern scholars talk of receiving data from "history and phenomenology of religion" in the same breath (i.e., Frederick J. Streng, *Studying Religion: Possibilities and Limitations of Different Definitions*, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, June, 1972, p. 221). Similarly while it is true that history can become the charnel house of meaningless facts that is not what it sets out to be. It too tries to understand (see Sidney Hook, ed., *Philosophy and History*, New York: University Press, 1963, p. 325-336 and *passim*). Thus one is left with the third option — the difference in the quality of understanding sought — as pivotal to the distinction between the History of Religion and the Phenomenology of Religion.

31) The present mood in the Study of Religion is strongly in favour of a continued recognition of the interdependence of the History of Religion and the Phenomenology of Religion highlighted early by Kristensen and Van der Leeuw and limelighted by Eliade and Wach. Thus also C. J. Bleeker, *op. cit.*, p. 150. This paper therefore is an academic salmon swimming upstream in its concern with the *distinction* between the two fields, rather than their dependence. See Mircea Eliade, *Cultural Fashions and History of Religions*. Middletown, Conn.: Center for Advanced Studies, Wesleyan University, 1967, *passim*.

32) This change in the analytical gear provides an occasion for a somewhat lighter observation. This is a paper on the distinction between the History of Religion and the Phenomenology of Religion. Section II used the historical method in part in surveying the historical evolution of the thinking on the point. This Section III will use the phenomenological method in the sense that it will take one topic and compare two items therein — the responses of a historian and a phenomenologist.

33) G. Van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, Volume I, New York: Harper and Row, 1963, Chapter 12.

34) Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1959, p. 232.

35) G. Van der Leeuw has referred to both of these figures in his discussion of the Saviour motif (*vide op. cit.*, p. 106, 109).

In his analysis of the Saviour mythos, Van der Leeuw refers to two well-established views regarding the origin of the Saviour figures.³⁶⁾ The first view regards the Saviour figure as having the "personification of Nature's power as its basis."³⁷⁾ As the life-cycle of Osiris can be identified with the experience of the seasons, he falls into this category.³⁸⁾ This is the periodic form of the Saviour. The second view regards the Saviour figure as "derived from some historic form of a bringer of salvation."³⁹⁾ Jesus Christ falls into this category. This is the historic form of the Saviour.

Now as a phenomenologist G. Van der Leeuw first recognizes the multivalence of the Saviour figure.⁴⁰⁾ And this leads him to recognize that the mythical structure around "Osiris requires the features of a historic man"⁴¹⁾ and that "the feast of Epiphany, January 5, was already that of god Dionysus before it was connected with Jesus."⁴²⁾

36) G. Van der Leeuw, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

37) *Ibid.* Also see W. B. Kristensen, *op. cit.*, p. 66-67.

38) Thus Van der Leeuw describes Osiris as the "god of self-renewing vegetation" (*op. cit.*, p. 103). For more on the natural and seasonal basis of Osiris see James Henry Breasted, *Developmental of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912, p. 22-23; *The Conquest of Civilization*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1926, p. 59; Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, New York: Harper and Row, 1961, p. 103 etc.

39) G. Van der Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

40) In contrast to Kristensen who looked upon the Saviour figure as multiform, Van der Leeuw looks upon the figure rather as multivalent. Kristensen points out how a Sun-god (*op. cit.*, p. 66-67), an animal (*op. cit.*, p. 161), or a Soter (*op. cit.*, p. 266) could be a Saviour figure. Van der Leeuw rather points out that a Saviour figure combines several attributes (as contrasted to assuming several forms). Just as in the poem by Stefan George which he cites (*op. cit.*, p. 106-107) the child is looked upon as friend, as god, as spring all at once, the Saviour figure blends the salvific roles of the son, the spring, the healer etc. With Mircea Eliade the focus of interest shifts again. He recognizes the revolutionary nature of the divergence between the periodic and the historic types (Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, *op. cit.*, p. 110 and passim) and his analysis proceeds on quite different lines.

41) G. Van der Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 108. Osiris takes on not merely a historic but also a royal image. "This man was a king, or if not a king, he should have been one for he taught men agriculture, gave them laws and culture in general, as did Demeter and Triptolemus in Greece and so many more or less primitive figures of other peoples" (*Ibid.*). Osiris as a matter of fact was "the king of the dead" (Henri Frankfort, *op. cit.*, p. 103) and "the epitome of past rulers" (*Ibid.*, p. 104).

42) G. Van der Leeuw, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. III. And for an association of Dionysus with the seasons see *Ibid.*, p. 107.

In other words, the periodic Saviour figure is seen as putting on a historic garb and the historic Saviour figure is seen as not free from links with vegetation and periodicity.

In other words, there is a structural convergence between the periodic form and the historic form of the Saviour and this leads G. Van der Leeuw to the recognition that the Saviour "is born when the time is 'fulfilled'. It is this fatefulness of the time of salvation that links the periodic form of the Saviour with the historic."⁴³) This is one of the ways in which G. Van der Leeuw deals with the Saviour motif.

What captures attention at this point, however, is not so much what he does as what he does *not* do.⁴⁴) G. Van der Leeuw does

43) G. Van der Leeuw, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

44) G. Van der Leeuw is concerned with form, with structure, with processes within the structure. In this case he is concerned with the structural form, and the structural processes of the Saviour myth. This is what he is concerned with and this is the concern of the phenomenologist. But it is as important here to see what he is *not* concerned with as it is to see what he is concerned with. He is not concerned with the effect the Osiris myth may have had on Christian beliefs about Christ.

Is this lack of concern, this *un-concern* with historical interaction unique to Van der Leeuw among phenomenologists? Hardly. Kristensen discusses the idea of the "son of man" at some length (*op. cit.*, p. 264-266) and pulls together material from Babylonian religion (*Ibid.*, p. 264), from Biblical literature (*Ibid.*, p. 265), and from Jewish sources (*Ibid.*, p. 266). Yet he never touches upon the question, even the possibility, of interaction among these religious traditions. Thus when he introduces Egyptian material with the remark that "Perhaps the Egyptian *sa-s* is also *related* to this idea" (*Ibid.*, p. 266, second emphasis added) the choice of the word *relation* seems significant — a relation is seen, no influence. At some places where Kristensen does consider influence it tends to be discounted (*op. cit.*, p. 496).

That this attitude to overlook "history" is not a personal penchant but an aspect of the Phenomenology of Religion is confirmed by the remarks Raffaele Pettazzoni makes while examining the phenomenological structure of the Supreme Being: "Phenomenology can ignore the historical-cultural sequences of ethnology and the general theories of the development of religious history. This development can be thought of in evolutionary (i.e. E. B. Tylor) or involutionary (i.e. W. Schmidt) sense; in either case phenomenology can ignore these theories." Van der Leeuw has written that: "Von einer historischen 'Entwicklung' der Religion, weisst die Phänomenologie nichts." (Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitagawa, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 65).

Similarly, a restraint in discussing "influence" and in giving it any prominence and centrality can be seen in Mircea Eliade. It should be borne in mind that Mircea Eliade is not a "pure" phenomenologist and seems to prefer being a Historian of Religion in the broadest sense. He writes: "But an understanding

not even broach, much less discuss the possibility that the Osiris myth may have influenced the Christ "myth" — that the fact that

must be reached concerning the importance to be accorded to 'history' in this type of investigation. As we have said more than once elsewhere, and we shall have occasion to show more fully in the complementary volume (in preparation) to *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, although the historical conditions are extremely important in a religious phenomenon (for every human datum is in the last analysis a historical datum), they do not wholly exhaust it. We will cite only one example here. The Altaic Shaman ritually climbs a birch tree in which a certain number of steps have been cut; the birch symbolises the World Tree, the steps representing the various heavens through which the shaman must pass on his ecstatic journey to the highest heaven; and it is extremely probable that the cosmological schema implied in this ritual is of Oriental origin. Religious ideas of the ancient Near East penetrated far into Central and North Asia and contributed considerably to giving Central Asian and Siberian shamanism their present features. This is a good example of what 'history' can teach us concerning the dissemination of religious ideologies and techniques. But, as we said above, *history* of a religious phenomenon cannot reveal *all* that this phenomenon, by the mere fact of its manifestation, seeks to show us. Nothing warrants the supposition that influences from Oriental cosmology and religion *created* the ideology and ritual of the ascent to the sky among the Altaians; similar ideologies and rituals appear all over the world and in regions where ancient Oriental influences are excluded a priori. More probably, the Oriental ideas merely *modified* the ritual formula and cosmological implications of the celestial ascent; the latter appears to be a primordial phenomenon, that is, it belongs to man as such, not to man as a historical being; witness the dreams, hallucinations and images of ascent found everywhere in the world, apart from any historical or other 'conditions'. All these dreams, myths, and nostalgias with a central theme of ascent or flight cannot be exhausted by a psychological explanation, and this indefinable, irreducible element perhaps reveals the real situation of man in cosmos, a situation that, we shall never tire of repeating, is not solely 'historical.'" (Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism*, op. cit., p. xiii-xiv). This is what the Historian of Religion in its broadest sense has to say on the issue. The divide between the historian of religion (narrow sense) and the phenomenologist can be seen in the statement that the "*history* of a religious phenomenon cannot reveal *all* that this phenomenon, by the mere fact of its manifestation seeks to show us." The language unmistakably belongs to the Phenomenology of Religion.

While it is the existential element in the above situation that rivets Eliade's attention, a traditional Historian of Religion would probably be more concerned with the fact that the word 'Shaman' is probably related to the Buddhist Sramana (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam & Co., 1961, p. 2086; but also see James Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. XI, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954, p. 441) and similar considerations. More illuminating, however, is the contrast between Mircea Eliade's position with that of Wilfred Cantwell Smith whose seminar at the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, Spring 1963, explored the thesis that "the historical interrelations among traditions have been more significant, and even decisive, at the least at certain moments, than has generally been recognised" (W. C. Smith, personal com-

in the Osirian myth Osiris revives after dying may have influenced the Christian belief in the resurrection of Christ.

But this is precisely what the historian is concerned with when parallels arise. This becomes clear when we examine what a historian, rather than a phenomenologist, does with Osiris and Christ. He sees the influence of one on the other, of Egyptian religion on Christian religion,⁴⁵) of Osiris on Christ. What the historian sees in this context has been eloquently summarized by a popular historian thus.

What distinguished this [Egyptian] religion above everything else was its emphasis on immortality. If Osiris, the Nile and all vegetation might rise again, so might man. The amazing preservation of the dead body in the dry soil of Egypt lent some encouragement to this belief which was to dominate Egyptian faith for thousands of years and to pass from it, by its own resurrection, into Christianity.⁴⁶⁾

munication to writer, April 7, 1973). This seminar bore the title 'Historical Interrelations among Man's Religious Traditions' and paid "special attention to mutual relations across religious boundaries at selected critical periods: the Hellenistic Age; Sasani/Manichee developments; the trilogy in medieval Spain; crystallization of Islamic, "Sikh", "Hindu" in Mughul India; the "Three Teachings" in medieval China; Ryobu Shinto; global interactions in the 19th and 20th centuries" (*The Divinity School Bulletin*, 1972-73, Vol. LXLX, Number 16, p. 72).

Thus the lack of, or the limited nature of the phenomenologist's concern with areas of influence among traditions is matched by an avidity of interest and a major concern with those issues on the part of the historian of religion.

45) He discusses not only similarities but also differences, he analyzes influence or absence thereof. Thus Henri Frankfort, *op. cit.*, p. 81 etc.

46) Will Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954, p. 202. Will Durant claims to be following James Henry Breasted here. Though James Henry Breasted can be read as implying the influence of the risen Osiris on risen Christ he never says quite that in the references given by Will Durant (*op. cit.*, p. 966) who cites pages 46, 83 of *The Dawn of Conscience* (*op. cit.*). J. H. Breasted does, however, make a statement to the effect on p. 105 which runs: "That which thou thyself sowest is not quickened, except it die."

These words of Saint Paul (I Cor. 15:36) are but a late hint of the profound impression made by the annual cycle of dying and reviving vegetable life in the minds of ancient men. We recall that the Greek mysteries were saturated with the same ideas, and the Mediterranean world was everywhere keenly responsive to Oriental conceptions of this kind. Their *influence* on the New Testament is unmistakable. The *oldest* revelation of the effect of the verdure on the thoughts of men regarding death is found most fully in the sweeping triumph of the Osirian beliefs over other early Egyptian ideas of the hereafter. The *latest* manifestation of the persistent power of this earliest surviving impression of nature on the soul of man is of course modern devotion to the Easter festival" (*The Dawn of Conscience*, *op. cit.*, p. 105, first emphasis supplied).

For other elements of Egyptian influence on Christianity see James Henry Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience*, *op. cit.*, p. 102, 113, etc. And Will Durant, *op. cit.*, p. 201, etc.

IV

The foregoing comparison of the manner in which a phenomenologist and a historian handles the same topic and the same material provides some clues for distinguishing between History of Religion and Phenomenology of Religion. When History of Religion encounters comparable data it looks for the operation of historical influences; when Phenomenology of Religion encounters comparable data it seeks out structural significances.

In order to develop this clue into a criterion, however, we need to test it out, an exercise which might be complicated by the fact that in "the majority of cases" the historian and the phenomenologist are "combined in the person of a single investigator."⁴⁷⁾ Such a test case can be made out if we cast out net on the Saviour motif a little wider to take in the Judaic and the Buddhist religious traditions as well, something not attempted by G. Van der Leeuw himself.⁴⁸⁾ The Saviour motif, indeed, is common both to the Judeo-Christian tradition and the Buddhist. One way in which the motif operates in the Judeo-Christian tradition is through the concept of the Messiah.⁴⁹⁾ One way in which it operates in Buddhism is through the figure of Maitreya⁵⁰⁾ — the Buddha to be.

The exercise can now be carried forward by considering what Richard H. Robinson has to say on this parallel between the Judeo-Christian and the Buddhist tradition. He writes:

Maitreya, unlike the Buddhas before him, is alive, so he can respond to the prayers of worshippers. Being compassionate, as his name indicates, he willingly grants help, and being a high god in his present birth, he has the power to do so. His cult thus offers its devotees the advantages of theism and Buddhism combined. India was caught up in the surge of messianic expectation which, originating probably in Iran, coursed through the Mediterranean world after 200 B.C.

Buddhism was more hospitable than Hinduism to the messianic idea because

47) G. Van der Leeuw, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 686.

48) Buddhism is poorly represented in G. Van der Leeuw's *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, *op. cit.* There are just a few references (p. 631-635, 675 etc.) and Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are not referred to in the discussion of the Saviour motif (*op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 106-115).

49) See James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 8, New York: Scribner's Sons, 1953, p. 570-581.

50) See Mircea Eliade, *From Primitives to Zen*, New York: Harper and Row, 1967, p. 400-403 for a comparative context; etc.

it was more open to Western influences, and because from the first it took history and pseudo-history more seriously. Accustomed to thinking of the past in terms of teacher-pupil lineages, Buddhists came in due course to anticipate the future sage, just as the Hebrews came to dream of a future anointed prophet-king after musing long on the series of prophets and kings in their ancient history... ⁵¹⁾

On the basis of this passage it can be said that Richard H. Robinson accounts for the parallel in three distinct though interconnected ways. The first explanation which he offers is that the cult of Maitreya shows India "caught up in the surge of messianic expectation which, originating probably in Iran, coursed through the Mediterranean world after 200 B.C." ⁵²⁾ Then he offers a second explanation, namely, that "Buddhism was more hospitable than Hinduism to the messianic idea because it was more open to Western influences." ⁵³⁾ This explanation is not a general one like the first which applied to a whole geographic region but a specific one applying to Buddhism. Then a third explanation is offered. Richard H. Robinson says that Buddhism took history and pseudo-history more seriously than Hinduism. "Accustomed to thinking of the past in terms of teacher-pupil lineage, Buddhists came in due course to anticipate the future sage, just as the Hebrews came to dream of a future anointed priest-king after musing long on the series of prophets and kings of ancient history." ⁵⁴⁾

It is helpful to recognise at this point that whereas the first two explanations are based on historical interaction, this last one, the third one, is *not* based on historical interaction but involves a similarity of structural process. The recognition of this distinction is crucial for pinpointing the roles of the historian and the phenomenologist which Richard H. Robinson seems to combine.

The issue can now be faced squarely. Whenever a parallel between two (or more) traditions, say tradition A and tradition B (to make a pseudo-algebraic formulation) arises, it can be explained in four ways. One can say that the parallel or similarity arises because (1) tradition A was influenced by tradition B; (2) tradition B was influenced by tradition A; (3) both tradition A and tradition B were

⁵¹⁾ Richard H. Robinson, *The Buddhist Religion*, Belmont: Dickenson Publishing Co., 1970, p. 59.

⁵²⁾ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁾ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁾ *Ibid.*

influenced in common by a third tradition or factor Z; and (4) the parallel is not induced by influence but is spontaneous: it is not the outcome of mutual or reciprocal historical interaction but the result of structural processes inherent within the traditions themselves or within man for that matter.

Now one can see what Richard H. Robinson was doing. He was exploring these options. He suggested first that the whole geographic region around Northwest India was in the grip of a messianic expectation. This corresponds to option no. 3 above. Then he suggested that the West influenced Buddhism. If we refer to the Western religious tradition as A and to the Buddhist tradition as B this corresponds to option no. 2 above. Richard H. Robinson did not suggest option no. 1 above, though this has been done.⁵⁵) But he did explore option no. 4 when he compared the structural dynamics of Buddhist master-disciple series with the Judaic series of prophets and kings.

V

Now we can return to our original concern: the search for a basis for distinguishing between History of Religion and Phenomenology of Religion (both the terms being used in the narrow sense). We can refer back to the four explanatory options that exist when a parallel between two traditions arises, namely that (1) A is influenced by B; (2) that B is influenced by A; (3) that both are influenced by Z; and (4) that the parallel does not arise out of the dynamics of historical interaction but arises from the similarities of structural processes.

Can it then be said that History of Religion explores the first three of these options and Phenomenology of Religion the fourth?

55) For an enthusiast's account of this possibility see Arthur Lillie, *The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893; *Buddhism in Christendom*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1887. For a historian's assessment of the possibility see Hem Chandra Rai Chaudri, Buddhism in Western Asia in B. C. Law, ed., *Buddhist Studies*, Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1931, p. 636-640. For a scholar of Buddhism's assessment see Edward Couze, Buddhism: the Mahayana in R. C. Zaehner, ed., *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1959, p. 296-297.

FRUSTRATED BELIEFS AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

A Psychological Enquiry into the Gospels of the New Testament

BY

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Belief is essential to the conception of religious systems and individuals. Belief crisis is an almost inevitable part in the evolution of both of them. Belief crisis might happen as a result of frustrated or disconfirmed beliefs, unfulfilled hopes and expectations. From a psychological point of view, this crisis can be examined using the theory of cognitive dissonance and its resolution, which was developed and researched by Festinger et al. and which won recognition after the publication of their book, *When Prophecy Fails* ¹).

Here it will suffice to explain cognitive dissonance as: "The condition in which one has beliefs, or knowledge that disagree with each other or with behavioral tendencies; when such cognitive dissonance arises, the subject is motivated to reduce the dissonance through changes in behavior or cognition." ²)

The idea that Christ's crucifixion is an instance of disconfirmation of a belief (his being the Messiah) and thus creating a cognitive dissonance in his followers is hinted at by Festinger, though with deep reservation (His main objection to using the crucifixion as a demonstration of his theory is "the unreliability of the data.") This line of reasoning is not new at all, as it is clarified by Flusser in "Salvation Present and Future":

Since Albert Schweitzer, the importance of eschatology for original Christianity has rightly been stressed. Later, a further point entered the scholarly discussion: If Christianity at its very beginnings expected that "The present

1) Festinger, L., Riecken, H. W., and Schacter, S. *When Prophecy Fails*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956.

2) Hilgard, E. R., and Atkinson, R. C. *Introduction to Psychology*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1967.

generation will live to see" Christ's second coming (Mk. XIII, 30), these hopes were not fulfilled. How much did this frustrated belief change the original structure of Christianity? Many think that this "Parousieverzögerung" was the decisive turning-point in Christian faith, which almost utterly changed its structure. According to this opinion non fulfilled eschatological expectations caused orthodox Christianity to come into existence and became the center of Christian thought; instead of expecting their salvation in future, Christians learned to look back. Their hopes now became based upon the salvation which already took place through Christ.

It seems to me that it is worth rethinking this thesis, because in its outspread form it does not fit the facts as reflected in ancient Christian sources and study of parallel phenomena in history of religions does not confirm it.³⁾

A careful analysis of these two studies reveals that two independent and two dependent variables are dealt with. The first two are alternative conceptions of the belief crisis:

- A. Unfulfilled eschatological expectations.
- B. The crucifixion or death of Jesus.

The second two are alternative modes of the crisis resolution:

- 1. Structural change, which is the core of Festinger's theory, that specifies the circumstances under which increased proselytizing would be expected to follow disconfirmation.
- 2. Content change i.e. Christology as expressed in the New Testament.

From these variables, four research hypotheses can be extrapolated. Flusser excludes *A1* and *A2* and Festinger rejects *B1*. Consequently, *B2* will be dealt with in this paper.

Unfulfilling Festinger's condition for cognitive dissonance, the validity of variable *A* is to be doubted.⁴⁾ Other research reports failure to replicate variable *1*.⁵⁾ Thus, further support is given for examining hypothesis *B2*.

3) Flusser, D. "Salvation Present and Future" in *NVMEN*, International Review for the History of Religions. Volume XVI, Fasc. 2, September 1969. pp. 139-155.

4) According to Festinger, disconfirmation of a belief will lead to and bring about a cognitive dissonance under the following five conditions; (1) A belief must be held with deep conviction and it must have some relevance to action. (2) The believer must have committed himself (by taking important action which is difficult to undo). (3) The belief must be sufficiently specific and sufficiently concerned with the real world so that it may be refuted unequivocally by events. (4) Such undeniable disconfirming evidence is produced and recognized by the believer. (5) The individual believer must have social support which enables him to withstand the disconfirming evidence.

5) Hardycy A. Jane, and Braden, Marcia. "Prophecy Fails Again; A Report

Beyond the considerations discussed above, the christological developments represent critical and far reaching changes; The Christian ethics, as in "The Sermon on the Mount" become secondary to Jesus' own being; "Kerugma" becomes more important than "Didache"; and Jesus more important than the Bible; a Jewish ideological movement accomodates itself to the Greco-Roman culture; the early Christians, who fought the religious establishment, begin building one of their own; a religion of duties becomes one of belief. About all of these changes Nietzsche said, "One would look in vain for a greater example of world historical irony."

The author hopes to make this irony at least somewhat more comprehensible.

Viewing these changes from a psychological point of view creates the dilemma of relying either on banal behavioristic approaches to religious phenomena, or on intelligible unfounded speculations. The method of inquiry in this article offers a possible alternative.

The main research hypothesis of the present article is that Jesus' death created in his believers a cognitive dissonance, whose resolution constitutes the Christology in the Gospels of the New Testament.⁶⁾

II.

To test this research hypothesis, one must: first prove that a cognitive dissonance did exist; secondly, supply a predictive model of its resolution and point out the material relevant to it and thirdly, find a confirmation for the validity of this model and theory.

Accordingly, the following propositions should be proven:

- A) There was a multi-faceted belief in Jesus by his disciples and followers.
- B) There was a commitment to this belief.
- C) The belief was disconfirmed by Jesus' crucifixion. Thus, a belief crisis came into existence. In terms of cognitive dissonance theory, element "A" is: "Jesus being considered to be a superior person, one beyond the realm of mortal man;" and element "B" is "Jesus being crucified and put into contemptible death." While not-"A" is implied from "B" (or "A" from not-"B").

on a Failure to Replicate." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. Volume 62, No. 2, 1962. pp. 131-141.

6) This article is based on the first part of the author's research which deals with the New Testament in its entirety. There, differentiation is made between Early Christology (which is discussed in the present article) and the Late Christology (which will be discussed in another article).

Review of relevant publications ⁷⁾ reveals some possible resolutions:

1. One can always forget or suppress the incongruity as well as repress and deny one of the constituent elements. (This possibility is dealt with by Freud as defense mechanisms.)
2. Bolstering: Instead of removing the incongruity, one seeks many congruent elements to neutralize it and thus reduce the relative dominance of the gap. i.e. a man, who (A) smokes cigarettes and (B) knows that it might be dangerous to his health, would claim that smoking helps him to relax, that cigarettes smell and taste good, give him a masculine appearance, and besides, most doctors smoke. (One can always find relief in the incongruity of others.)
3. Differentiation-Compartmentalization: i.e. one who believes (A) in the Bible (B) in evolution, might differentiate between the figurative Bible and the literal one, and think that he accepts only the first one (the second being in contradiction with the concept of evolution).
4. Transcendence: one might argue that the Bible and evolution are two faces of "one supreme entity which combines antithesis in a dynamic equilibrium."

Abelson ⁸⁾ claims that, "there will be a hierarchy of resolution attempts in general proceeding in the following order: denial, bolstering, denial, differentiation, and transcendence." (The first denial is total and primitive and only later comes the second and more sophisticated one.)

This hypothesis will have to be modified, taking into account two considerations: the resolutions that will be dealt with had to be acceptable to a community of believers and finding their expression in a written text, could not include a primitive and total denial (which might have satisfied a single believer or a group of believers in the very earliest stages, but in the later stages must have been disregarded. ⁹⁾

7) Campbell, D. T., "Conformity in Psychology's Theories of Acquired Behavioral Dispositions" in eds. Berg, I. A., and Mass, B. M. *Conformity and Deviation*. New York: Harper and Rowe, 1961. pp. 101-158.

McGuire, W. J. "The Current Status of Cognitive Consistency Theories" in ed. Fishbein, M. *Readings in Attitude Theories and Measurement*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1969. pp. 401-421.

8) Abelson, R. T., "Models of Resolution of Belief Dilemmas" in ed. Fishbein, M. *op. cit.*, pp. 349-356.

9) In fact, there is some evidence that an early sect believed that Jesus wasn't crucified—two angels carried him away from the cross, and what the spectators saw was nothing more than a mirage. Iranaeus in his *Gnostic Docetae* tells of a belief in which Jesus performed a transfiguration and it was Petrus who was crucified instead of him.

The second consideration is that differentiation is usually an unwritten reaction. One can hardly think of presentation of facts and their interpretation within the same document, especially so when it is considered to be an historical and authentic text.

These two considerations exclude the possibility of resolutions by total primitive denial and by differentiation. Thus, Abelson's hypothesis modified to our case will predict the following order: bolstering, denial, and transcendence.

Most scholars hold the opinion that in the New Testament Mark is the earliest Gospel, Luke and Matthew later and John the latest.¹⁰) This chronology offers a validity test of our hypothesis; predicting a hierarchy of resolutions in a given order i.e. (1) predicting different frequencies of each mode of resolution in the different Gospels. (2) Predicting a correlation between these two sequences—time of writing (earliest, middle, latest) and mode of resolution (respectively—bolstering, denial, transcendence). Verifying (1) will be conclusive enough to validate the research hypothesis. Verifying (2) besides lending stronger proof to the hypothesis will also bring to light an additional and most significant finding of the present research: confirmation of the chronology of the Gospels using a psychological model.

Technically, the research method employed is one of textual analysis which necessitates careful reading and rereading of the Gospels; first to identify the elements of each mode of resolution and then to check their frequency in each Gospel.

The following elements constitute the early Christology:

A. Bolstering

1. The extraordinary and prodigious birth and childhood of Jesus.
2. His recognition by God, men of excellence and believers.
3. Jesus's recognition of himself.
4. Miracles, temptation and signs.

B. Denial

1. An unusual death—after which occurred resurrection, appearance, ascendance to heaven and in the future reappearance (Parusia).
2. Jesus knew, predicted and chose his own death.
3. Jesus died a death of atonement and mission.
4. Others are to be blamed for his death.

C. Transcendence

1. "And the scripture was fulfilled."—a deterministic concept.
2. Jesus is of another world; human concepts of birth and death are not relevant to his being.

10) "Who Has the Good News Straight?". *Time*: December 27, 1971.

In the next section, supportive data is provided for the claims mentioned above.

III.

A) There was a multi-faceted belief in Jesus by his disciples and followers.

"What have you do to do with us Jesus of Nazareth? *Have you come to destroy us?* I know who you are, the *Holy One of God.*" (Mark, 1:24)

"And he *healed* many who were sick with various diseases, and *cast out many demons*; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because *they knew him.*" (Mk, 1:34)

"And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that *even wind and sea obey him?*" (Mk, 4:41)

"And those in the boat *worshipped him*, saying, "Truly you are the *Son of God.*" (Mk, 14:32)

"...and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" And they told him, "*John the Baptist*, and others say, *Elijah*: and others *one of the prophets.*" And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "*You are the Christ.*" And he charged them to tell no one about him." (Mk, 8:27-30)

The parallel paragraph in Matthew is more detailed:

"And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elia, and others *Jeremiah* or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the *Son of the living God.*" (Mt, 16:14-17)

In Luke, the paragraph is closer to that found in Mark. It is not to be found in John.

"Rabbi, we know that you are *a teacher come from God*; for no one can do these signs that you do, *unless God is with him,*" said Nicodemus." (John, 3:2)

Such expressions come not only from Jesus' disciples:

"...Bartimae'us a blind beggar, the son of Timae'us was sitting by

the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "*Jesus, Son of David*, have mercy upon me!" (Mk, 10:46-50)

"And they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw garments on it; and he sat upon it. And many spread their garments on the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed cried out, "*Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming! Hosanna in the highest!*" (Mk, 11:7-10)

This same conclusion can be drawn from a negative attitude towards Jesus:

"The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan *and have a demon?*" (John, 8:48)

B) There was a commitment to this belief:

"Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed; also from Judea and Jerusalem and Idume'a and from beyond the Jordan and from about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude hearing all that he did, came to him." (Mk, 3:7-9)

"Peter began to say to him, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life." (Mk, 10:28-30)

"And Zacchae'us stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one or anything, I restore it fourfold." (Luke, 19:8)

Part of the commitment included being criticized by others:

"Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" (Mk, 2:18) "And the Pharisees said to him, "Lord, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" (Mk, 2:24)

The disciples-apostles left everything to follow Jesus:

"As he walked the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him." (Mt, 4:18-22)

Jesus demanded from his followers to relinquish possessions.

"And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing, go, sell what you have, and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." (Mk, 10:21, 22)

From his disciples, Jesus demanded almost self-denial:

"He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics." (Mk, 6:8, 9)

"As they were going along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Lk, 9:57-62)

A special kind of commitment to their belief was expressed by the women, not only by relinquishing possessions and material benefits, but also by love and admiration.

"And behold, a woman of a city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was sitting at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the

hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." (Lk, 7:37, 38)

"...And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Mag'dalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Jo-an'na the wife of Chu'za, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them (him) out of their means." (Lk, 8:1-3)

"And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the jar and poured it over his head." (Mk, 14:3)

C) The belief was disconfirmed by Jesus's crucifixion, which was the turning point in early Christianity:

"And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me?" (Mk, 14:48)

"And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophesy!" And the guards received him with blows." (Mk, 14:65)

"And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the praetorium); and they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him." (Mk, 15:16-20)

"And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" So also the chief priests mocked him to one another with the scribes, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him." (Mk, 15:27-32) In addition to this, in Matthew it is said: "He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him, for he said; I am the Son of God." (Mt, 27:43)

"And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said. "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him (And others took a spear and pierced his side, and out come water and blood)" (Mt, 27:48, 49)

In Luke, the description is similar. In John it's almost absent.

Testimony to the big disappointment is found in Luke:

"Then one of them, named Cle'opas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened." (Luke, 24:18-21)

Even before the crucifixion (when Jesus described his approaching doom):

"After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him." (Jn, 6:66)

Jesus' death stands in contradiction to the belief in him. His believers already understood this contradiction from his prophecy alone.

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show by what death he was to die. The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains for ever. How can you say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" (Jn, 12:32-34)

This passage saves us the scholarly speculation which might have proven that Jesus' crucifixion stood in contradiction to the eschatological expectations of his disciples (waiting for the eternal Messiah who was supposed to come after the killed one—John the Baptist).

We have before us a movement of believers in a man more than in an idea. A man who was conceived to be, in different stages and by different people, a holy-one; one of the prophets, healer and exorcist, miracles' performer who dominates nature's forces, John

the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, Christ, Son of God. There came to exist a movement of believers that committed themselves by following him, through sacrifices, criticism, persecutions, love and admiration. In opposition to this is Jesus' contemptible death by crucifixion (which Cicero describes as "the most cruel and abominable," Tacitus, as "Slaves' death" and Josephus, as "The most pitiful death").

In the Gospels, it is mentioned that the "women who had followed him from the Galilee" were present at the crucifixion (only Luke says that his acquaintances were present too and John says that his mother and aunt were there). Their reaction is not described. This emotional continence is literarily very impressive:

"And all the multitudes who assembled to see the sight, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things." (Lk, 23:48. 49)

The "sight" they saw and what they felt in their "hearts" was going to be of critical significance in the development of the christology and more so Christianity itself.

More can be found in the Gospels about Jesus' thoughts and feelings before the crucifixion and his last words on the cross. They can serve to measure the dissonance resolution tendencies: the degree of acceptance of his own fate—as described in the Gospels—correlates to the scope of attempted resolutions in each Gospel. This supplies an additional support to our thesis:

Mark: "And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt." (14:36)

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "E'lo-i, E'lo-i, la'ma sabachtha'ni?" which means, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (15:34)

Matthew: A similar prayer is said three times: "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.... And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (26:38, 39)...

"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." "...My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done." (26:41, 42)

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, la'ma sabach-tha'ni?" that is "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (27:46)

Luke: Here Jesus' suffering is emphasized, but "balanced" by heavenly help.

"Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat become like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." (22:42-44)

"Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last." (23:46)

John: Here the prayer found in the synoptic Gospels is missing:

"Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" (18:11) "When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify the Son that the Son may glorify thee." (17:1) "But now I am coming to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves." (17:13)

"When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished;" and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." (19:30)

In the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, both the difficulty of "drinking the cup" and the cry of despair and solitude are described. This description evokes their human qualities.

In Luke, Jesus' suffering is described, but there is already heavenly interference. His last words on the cross express a complete acceptance. Here the description takes on an aura of the supernatural.

In John no more doubts and suffering exist. Jesus is looking forward to the cup, and when dying says vaguely, "it is finished."

This development from a suffering and hesitant Jesus, who is ready to accept the cup but in his last minutes feels forsaken; to Jesus that receives heavenly help and in his last minutes fully accepts his fate; and finally to Jesus who wants to glorify his Father with

his death, and dies indifferently—typifies the resolution of the belief crisis discussed until now.

IV.

In the following section, all the elements of the hypothesized resolutions will be examined separately as found in each of the four gospels.

A. *Bolstering*: strengthening element “A”—the superhuman aspect of Jesus.

1. *Jesus' extraordinary and prodigious birth and childhood:*

In the Gospels, five possible ways of expressing this are found: (a) Jesus was born in Bethlehem. (b) Jesus is a descendant of David. (c) Jesus is a child of the Holy Spirit. (d) His birth, name and fate were foreseen and told to Mary. (e) He was an exceptional child and adolescent.

Mark: No details appear about his birth and childhood. The beginning of the account is: “In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.” (1:9) Thus, none of the five expressions are found here.

Matthew: Begins with a book of genealogy of Jesus, son of David, the son of Abraham (1:1-17). About his birth: “When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit.” (1:18)

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, departed with his parents to Egypt and returned with them to Nazareth—all of these to “fulfill what was spoken by the prophets.”

Of the five expressions (d) and (e) do not appear, (a) is emphasized.

Luke: Here the book of genealogy of Jesus is longer and goes back to “...the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.” (3:23-28) The continuation of the genealogy from Abraham to God, might serve to bridge the apparent discrepancy between (b) and (c).

In Luke, the order of events is different from that in Matthew:

Joseph came from Nazareth to Bethlehem where Jesus was born and later returned with his family to Nazareth.

The five expressions appear here with a special emphasis on (b), (d), and (e).

The birth circumstances are more prodigious than in the former Gospel: The angel Gabriel is sent from God to tell Mary that:

“...you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and his kingdom there will be no end.” (1:30-33)

This happens on a background of other miracles—as the giving birth to John by Zechariah and Elizabeth (1:5-25). At the age of twelve, already Jesus is described as a wise and well liked boy who knew his destiny.

John: Of all the five expressions described, only (c) appears, but here, without any reference to physical reality (Jesus’ parents). In John, as will be shown in section C2., the main feature is resolution by transcendence, which is expressed in the Gospel’s opening verses:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (1:1-5)

Jesus is the only Son of God and about the children of God the Evangelist says:

They were born “not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” (1:13)

In John, the mundane details of Jesus’ birth and childhood are unimportant, and so it suffices to say: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (1:14)

The use of such a sophisticated means of resolution eliminates the need for introducing the expressions of bolstering found in Matthew and Luke and even permits including material which contradicts them:

“They (the Jews) said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose

father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" (6:42) (which contradicts (c)).

"The Jews marveled at it, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" (1:15) (This contradicts (e) in the synoptic Gospels).

"Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" (7:41, 42) (And here a contradiction of (a) and (b) together).

2. His recognition by God, men of excellence, and believers.

Mark: "And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved son; with thee I am well pleased." (1:10, 11) In the second time, after Jesus's meeting with Moses and Eli'jah "...a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." (9:7) John the baptizer preached: "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and unite." (1:7)

Peter answered that Jesus is Christ. The blindman, the believers on the way to Jerusalem and the demons, all recognized him. (8:29, 10:46-48, 11:7-10, 5:7)

Matthew: The recognition of Jesus comes earlier: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." (2:1, 2) In addition to what was said by John in the last gospel, he says here; "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (3:14) After which comes God's recognition, as in Mark. (3:16, 17)

All the other expressions by his followers are found here as in Mark: Peter, two blindmen (in Mark there is one), the people before his arrival in Jerusalem and the demons.

Luke: Jesus is recognized by the angel Gabriel (1:26-35), by Elizabeth when she was filled with the Holy Spirit (1:39-45), by an appearance of the angel to the shepherds (2:8-20), by the revelation to Simeon (2:25-35) and by Anna—the prophetess (2:36-38). Here also, as in the former Gospels, the Holy Spirit descended upon him as a dove and a voice came from heaven (3:21, 22); the same after the meeting with Moses and Elijah (9:28-36). Recognition by his followers is mentioned too.

John: In this Gospel, the disciples recognize Jesus earlier: Andrew says to Simon his brother, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ) (1:41). Nicodemus recognizes him too (3:1, 2) and so does John the Baptist (1:19-34), and again came a voice from heaven (12:28). The Samaritans believed that he is the “Saviour of the world.” (4:39-42), but the others believed less in him:

“There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, “He has a demon, and he is mad, why listen to him?” (10:19, 20).

Such non recognition is not found in the synoptic Gospels. Martha believed that Jesus is the Christ (11:27), and so did the the people at his entrance into Jerusalem (12:12-19).

3. Jesus' recognition of himself (being the Messiah)

This occurred on some occasions: in his reaction to the disciples' recognition of him, and in his answers to the high priests and Pilate at the inquiry.

Mark: “And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “you are the Christ.” And he charged them to tell no one about him.” (8:29, 30) Here there is neither confirmation nor denial.

“Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And Jesus said, “I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” (14:61, 62)

“And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” And he answered him, “You have said so.” (15:2)

And to his disciples Jesus said: "For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward." (9:41)

Matthew: "Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ." (16:16-20)

"And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming to the clouds of heaven." (26:63, 64)

"Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "You have said so." (27:11)

Luke: Here, Jesus already recognized himself when he was twelve years old.

"And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (2:49)

In Nazareth he read from the book of Isaiah; "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." ...Today this scripture has been fulfilled in you hearing." (4:16-21)

To his disciples; "And he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." But he charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief

priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” (9:18-22)

And the chief priests and scribes said; “If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” And they all said, “Are you the Son of God then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.” (22:66-70)

Jesus didn’t answer Herod’s questions and to Pilate’s question “Are you the King of Jews?” he answered, “You have said so.” (23:3, 9)

John: Here the questioning is different. “The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in temple, where all Jews come together; I have said nothing secretly.” (18:19, 20)

Pilate is the one who is judging Jesus. “Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?” Jesus answered, “My kingship is not of this world; If my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world.” (18:33-36)

Jesus is telling Nicodemus. “For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.” (3:17)

And in his conversation with the Samaritan woman, he again shows his self-recognition:

“The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.” (4:25, 26)

Jesus in his talk to the Jews on Sabbath at Jerusalem again and again talks about his being the Father’s true Son:

"This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God. (5:18) (5:17-47)

And also: "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me." (6:38 and the rest of the Chapter 25-71) "I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me." (7:30 and most of the chapter 25-44). Jesus's self-recognition is also evident in Chapter 8:21-59. To the Jews who said: "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe, The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness to me." (10:25, 26) "I and the Father are one." (10:30) And to Thomas he said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him." (14:6, 7)

4. *Miracles, temptations, and signs*: In the following table, (See p. 115) special events, signs and miraculous healings in the Gospels will be outlined differentiating between specific cases (where the name of the healed person is mentioned) and general ones (these will be written in parentheses).

The review of the different aspects of the resolution of dissonance by bolstering leads to the following conclusions:

1. Jesus' extraordinary and prodigious birth and childhood are not described at all in Mark, mentioned briefly in Matthew and expounded on in detail almost mythologically in Luke. In John, one could say that instead of Mythology, there is Theology.

2. His recognition by God is equal in the synoptic Gospels, and expressed in a smaller scope in John. Recognition by men of excellence is almost non-existent in Mark, more prominent in Matthew, and the most extended in Luke. In John, it is similar in scope to Mark. The recognition by his disciples and followers is again equal in the synoptic Gospels, but more prominent and especially stressed in John. Again we find a sequence of gradual change from Mark through Matthew to Luke, while in John the emphases are completely different.

3. Jesus's self-recognition is described with some differences in the synoptic Gospels but with a similar emphasis. In John more

Summary of Miracles and Signs according to Subjects

	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
The Satan's temptations	mentioned briefly	detailed description	detailed description	—
Meeting Moses and Elijah	+	+	+	—
calming down the storm (wind and sea)	1	1	—	—
walking on the sea	1	1	—	1
the empty net becomes full of fish	—	—	1	1; after his death
the witherings of the fig tree	1	1	—	—
turning water into wine	—	—	—	1
feeding many with little food	2	2	1	1
<i>Total</i>	5	5	2	3
commanding unclean spirits	4+(1)	7+(2)	4+(1)	—
healing diseases	5+(1)	2+(5)	9+(2)	2
revival of the dead	1	1	2	1
healing the blind	2	2+(1)	1	—
healing the deaf and dumb	1	1	1	1
<i>Total</i>	13+(2)	13+(8)	17+(3)	4

expressions of his recognition of himself as Christ are found. A review of his answers to the high priest reveals a descendant level of clarity and unequivocalty from Mark to Matthew, from Matthew to Luke and from Luke to John. This last point does not confirm the research hypotheses and needs an explanation (namely, the expected inter-Gospels development was not found and in the last case the order is reversed). A possible explanation might be the more unequivocal Jesus's admission at the trial that he is Christ, the more justified the verdict.

4. Miracles and signs: While Mark and Matthew describe the same miraculous events (e.g. walking on the sea), Luke discusses fewer than both of them. The predicted sequence is found only in regard to healing (in a growing number of cases and in more detailed description); in Matthew more than in Mark, in Luke more than in Matthew. John brings fewer and different cases and events.

These conclusions typify Mark as expressing most acutely the dissonance, with very few attempts to resolve it. Matthew is typified as a text in which the dissonance is still expressed but with resolution tendencies that find their utmost expression in Luke. The resolutions in Matthew are cautious and in Luke—exaggerated (stories about his birth and childhood, recognition by others, healing many and especially exorcism). Resolutions by bolstering are not used by John.

B. *Denial*: weakening element “B” (Jesus’s death)

1. *An unusual, non-final death—after which occurred resurrection, appearance, ascendance to heaven and in the future, reappearance (parousia) will take place:*

Mark: At the end of the Gospel, Jesus’s tomb is found empty (There are later versions that describe in addition, Jesus’s appearance).

Matthew: Jesus appears after his death twice to the women in Jerusalem and to his disciples in Galilee.

Luke: Jesus appears twice, both times in Jerusalem. In this Gospel, there is a new element—his ascendance to heaven: “While he blessed them, he parted from them (and was carried up into heaven).” (In the Revised Standard Version, the part in parentheses appears as a footnote added by “other ancient authorities.” Our mode of analysis bears also upon the problem of authenticity of such additions. The present addition would have a low probability of being authentic in Mark, slightly higher in Matthew, and a very high probability in Luke, being in accordance with the whole style of dissonance resolution in this Gospel.)

John: Jesus appears four times after his death (the author of the Gospel counts only three). It is understood that he ascended to heaven: “Do not hold me for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” (20:17)

2. *Jesus knew, predicted and chose his own death:*

Mark: “And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” (8:31)

"...for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to ask him." (9:31, 32)

Jesus's knowledge of his own death is also deducted from the vineyard parable (12:1-11). It was understood that Jesus talked about himself, "for they understood that he told the parable against them." (12:12). Jesus knew that he would be betrayed (14:17-21) and that his disciples would fall away, and that he would be raised from death (14:27-30).

Matthew: "But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (12:39, 40)

Here as in Mark, he prepares his disciples for his own death:

"From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on that third day be raised. (16:21)

"And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead." (17:9)

"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles and be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day." (20:18, 19) The same vineyard parable is found in this Gospel too. (21:33-43)

Jesus knew the exact date of his crucifixion:

"When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified." (26:1, 2)

As in Mark, he knows that he will be betrayed, he predicted by whom and knows that the hour is coming and the betrayer approaching. (26)

Very clearly, Jesus says that if he only wanted, his death could have been prevented.

"Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels." (26:53)

Luke: As in the last two Gospels, after his disciples recognize him to be Christ, Jesus starts to tell them about his death (9:22). He asked to tell Herod:

"And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.'" (13:32, 33)

Here too, he predicts his suffering and death (18:31-34), tells the vineyard parable (20:9-17) and knows beforehand of his betrayal, death and the falling out of his disciples. (22)

John: "Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." ...But he spoke of the temple of his body." (2:19-21)

In Capernaum he said:

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." (6:51)

At the end of this sermon, he talked about his betrayal.

"Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was to betray him." (6:70, 71)

Jesus expresses explicitly his willingness to die:

"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I have power to lay it of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father." (10:17, 18)

In Chapter 13, there are many expressions of his knowledge about

his own death (13:1-3, 11). Also in Chapter 16, there are many clues of his knowledge—but the disciples don't understand them. (16:16-18)

In the three synoptic Gospels, but not in John, there is an early reference to Jesus' knowledge of his end:

"Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast." (Mt, 9:15; Mk, 2:19; Lk, 5:34)

3. Jesus died a death of atonement and mission:

Mark: "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for the many." (14:23, 24)

Matthew: "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (26:27, 28)

Luke: In the Revised Standard Version, a similar verse is added as a footnote ("Other ancient authorities").

"...And likewise the cup after supper saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (22:17-20)

John: "The next day he (John) saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (1:29)

John called him in the same manner again (1:36)

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." (6:51)

"For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." (6:55)

"I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as

the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." (10:14, 15)

Ca'iaphas, the high priest, wanted Jesus to die for the nation:

"...you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish." He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and, not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." (11:50-52)

4. *Others are to be blamed for Jesus's death:* This type of resolution represents, what is called in terms of psychological defense mechanisms, 'displacement' or, 'finding a scapegoat.' Investing energy in blaming others for one's own difficulties, enables one to disregard the resulting consequences. Blaming the Jews for Jesus's death enables his believers to disregard the significance of the death.

In the synoptic Gospels, the Jews' blame is implied in describing the priests' instigation and the Jews' demand of Pilate to crucify Jesus (Mk, 15:6-15; Mt, 26:17-25; Lk, 23:13-25). In Matthew, the blame is stressed more:

"So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children." (Mt, 27:24, 25)

In John, the Jews, persecution, deprecation and killing of Jesus is described in full:

"And this was why the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did this on the sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working still, and I am working." This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath, but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God." (Jn, 5:16-18)

"After this Jesus went about in Galilee; he would not go about in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him." (7:1)

"...but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God; this is not what Abraham did." (8:40)

"The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" (8:48)

"So they took up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple." (8:59)

"His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue." (9:22)

"The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?" The Jews answered him, "We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God." (10:31-33)

"Again they tried to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands." (10:39)

The Jews' behavior is not just evil, it's returning evil for good deeds. "Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if any one knew where he was, he should let them know so that they might arrest him." (11:57)

"The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God." (19:7)

What is described in Matthew as said by Pilate, is here said by Jesus himself.

"Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin." (Jn 19:11)

Apparently, the need for finding a scapegoat was so great that the author attributed to Jesus this absurd statement (as if his delivery was done without being given from above).

This review of the different aspects of resolution by denial suggests:

1. Resurrection: is not found in Mark, Jesus appears twice in Matthew, twice in Luke with an addition of his ascendance to heaven,

and in John he appears four times and here too ascends to heaven.

2. Jesus knew, predicted and chose his own death; few expressions of this idea in Mark; in Matthew and Luke it is dealt with more; and in John, it is the most expressed and has a special emphasis.

3. Atonement: is little and similarly dealt with in the synoptic Gospels; in the Gospel of John it is a central idea which is fully dealt with (Lamb of God).

4. Blaming the Jews: again stressed little in the synoptics (in Matthew more than in the other two), yet greatly in John.

Regarding the first two subjects, we found a clear sequence of development from Mark to Matthew, from Matthew to Luke and Luke to John. Regarding the last two, we found generally equal little emphasis in the synoptics—and a tremendous emphasis in John.

C. *Transcendence*: Resolution beyond elements 'A' and 'B'

1. *Predestination*: events came to happen, to actualize what was written and prophesized from before. In the Gospels this deterministic concept is expressed by mentioning in the text that by some happening, "the scripture was fulfilled."

Mark: Events that recollect verses in the Bible (The Old Testament) are presented without the qualification "And the scripture was fulfilled." (i.e. Jesus's entry into Jerusalem) Only once does it happen (and in the R.S.V. it appears as an insertion by other ancient authorities):

"And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was reckoned with the transgressors." (15:27, 28)

Matthew: "He (Herod) inquired of them (the chief priest) where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet." (2:3-7)

"And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." (2:14, 15)

"Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children

in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he has ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

“A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled,
because they were no more.” (2:16-18)

“And he (Joseph) went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazarene.” (2:23)

“...and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Caper’na-um by the sea, in the territory of Zeb’ulun and Naph’tali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“The land of Zeb’ulun and the land of Naphtali,
toward the sea, across the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles—
the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light had dawned.” (4:13-16)

“All this Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet:

“I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.” (13:34, 35)

“This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

“Tell the daughter of Zion,
Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on an ass,
and on a colt, the foal of an ass.” (21:4, 5)

Jesus himself is relating to the scriptures:

“Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this

night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' (26:31)

"Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah ¹¹), saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me." (27:9, 10)

Luke: Here the Evangelist does not add the predeterministic qualification as in the former two; it is Jesus himself who does it.

After reading from the book of Isaiah, Jesus said:

"And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (4:21)

"And taking the twelve, he said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written of the Son of man by the prophets will be accomplished." (18:31)

Even after his death, in his appearance to his disciples, he says:

"Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead...." (24:44-46)

John: Until now two modes of this resolution were evident—either a comment by the Evangelist, or by Jesus himself. In John, a third mode is found which is a post-factum recognition by the disciples.

11) "Actually the Evangelist makes the mistake of crediting the prophecy to Jeremiah, and in this connection one cannot help smiling at the comical ingenuity with which Augustine tries to excuse so flaring a blunder. Matthew, Augustine says, knew very well that the sentence came from Zechariah, but he also knew that he was writing at the dictation of the Holy Ghost, and he dared not taken the liberty of correcting it. And why, Augustine proceeds, did the Holy Ghost dictate an inaccuracy? To show that all the Prophets were equally inspired and that it did not matter whether what was said by one was ascribed to another." (Augustine, *De Consensu, Evang.* III, 7. Cited in Craveri, M. *The Life of Jesus*. London: A Panther Book, 1969.) This constitutes another resolution of cognitive dissonance by transcendence. But actually, it can be learned that the Evangelist's aim was more to emphasize predestination than to show pedantic scholarship.

"His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for thy house will consume me." (2:17)

"When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken." (2:22)

"...for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead." (20:9)

In his sermons, Jesus is referring to the scriptures:

"You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me." (5:39)

"If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (5:46, 47)

"It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me." (6:45)

"Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods?' If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken)..." (10:34, 35)

"And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written,
"Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
sitting on an ass's colt!"

His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him." (12:14-16) ¹²⁾

Though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not

12) One gets the impression that events are changed here to suit the scripture. In Mark and Luke, it's written that Jesus sat on a colt and in Matthew it was an ass with a colt and in John it's a young ass: In John and Matthew, Zechariah 9:9 is cited or translated in accordance with the 'facts' presented: (John—"ass's colt"; Matthew—"on an ass and on a colt, the foal of an ass"; Zechariah—on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass). Such an observation demonstrates the need that was felt among the Evangelists to stress predestination—to find a solution to the dissonance.

believe in him; it was that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled;

“Lord, who has believed our report,
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”
Therefore, they could not believe.

For Isaiah again said,

“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with
their hearts,
and turn for me to heal them.”

Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke of him. Nevertheless many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.” (12:37-42)

And at Jesus’ crucifixion:

“...so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfil the scripture,

“They parted my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.” (19:24)

“After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture). “I thirst.” (19:28) ¹³

“For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of him shall be broken.” And again another scripture says, “They shall look on him whom they have pierced.” (19:36, 37)

2. Jesus is of another world: human concepts of birth and death are not relevant to his being:

This aspect is found only in John. In this Gospel, the word glorification is used instead of death or crucifixion:

“...but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him.” (12:16)

“No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man.” (3:13)

¹³) And again “Too much, is too little,” placing Jesus’s thirst, such a natural and human wish, so as to fulfill the scripture—adds to the picture a dimension of artificiality and exaggeration.

"But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me." (5:36)

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (6:38-40)

"Jesus then said, "I shall be with you a little longer, and then I go to him who sent me;" (7:33)

"He said to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world." (8:23)

"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." (13:1)

"Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." (14:19,20)

"You heard me say to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And how I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe." (14:28, 29)

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is to your advantage that I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment;" (16:7, 8)

Step by step, the death which was so contemptible, isolating and disappointing becomes acceptable: Returning to the outstretched arms of a loving Father, after doing his will on earth. Death turns into a gift of love for which the believers have to be happy. Moreover, this death becomes essential to the remaining others. Raising the

painful reality to a super and non-human plane is expressed to the full in the following verse:

"I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure! Now we know that you know all things, and need none to question you; by this we believe that you came from God." Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone; yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (16:28-33)

What an acute contrast from the man Jesus who cried on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?", to Jesus who has overcome the world.

Two resolutions by transcendence were discussed:

1. Predestination (fulfilling the scriptures) is expressed in three ways; as a comment added by the Evangelist; integrated into the sayings of Jesus; and mentioned by the disciples.

In Mark, this device is used only once by the Evangelist. In Matthew, it is used in the same way on more occasions (The wrong citation, mentioned before in a footnote, raises the possibility that in some cases, predestinatory comments are a later addition to the text). In Luke, predestination is stressed only in Jesus's saying. In John, this device is the most used in all the three ways.

2. "Jesus is not of this world" is a subject developed and stressed only in John and not at all in the synoptic Gospels.

CONCLUSIONS

The research hypothesis that the cognitive dissonance, which is the belief crisis in early Christianity, will be resolved gradually (from the earliest to the latest Gospel) by means of: bolstering, denial and transcendence (these too are presented from the earliest resolution to the latest) was tested by identifying the elements and constituents of each resolution and checking their frequency and dominance in each of the Gospels. Jesus's image before the crucifixion

(his attitude towards dying and his last words on the cross) was also examined.

In the three categories of resolution, and in nine elements out of ten (and the exceptional element was also explained), the hypothesis was verified.

The data presented enables us to typify each of the Gospels according to the evolving conception of christology and to describe this conception:

In *Mark*, no bolstering, denial or transcendence of the inner tension, which is presented very acutely, is found. (The dissonance remains unresolved). This indicates that of the Gospels, Mark is the earliest and is closest in its character to being an historical text.

In *Matthew*, there are a few attempts of resolution by bolstering and denial, but the inner tension is expressed almost as in Mark. There is use of one element of resolution by transcendence, of which there is some evidence of it being a later addition to the text. Matthew is evidently later than Mark and constitutes an historical text which suffers from moderate bias.

In *Luke*, there are many attempts of resolution with an extreme use of bolstering and denial. The inner tension is eased and diffused, but as a result, the Gospel is characterized as Mythology. Thus, Luke is later than the former two Gospels (but the time gap between Luke and Matthew is smaller than between Matthew and Mark).

In *John*, no resolutions by bolstering are found, but on the other hand denial is used more than in the synoptic Gospels in its scope and strength. Transcendental resolutions are used to the fullest in this Gospel and the inner tension, that was so prominent in Mark, does not exist here at all. John is the latest among the four Gospels (and the gap or the time lag between John and Luke is the biggest).

The picture of Christology presented here is partial, dealing only with the early Christology. However, it should be noted that in the New Testament, there are two Christologies which existed in different sects, appeared in different texts and answered different problems. But owing to interactions between the sects, interdependence between the problems (in the early Christology, "the death of Jesus," in the later one "frustrated eschatological expectations") and later additions and editions—diffusion of the borders and convergence took place.

Nevertheless, one can conclude that Christology is not a self-understood phenomenon. It can be approached from a causal—dynamic point of view. Christology answers needs, that spring from a crisis, and constitutes a line of resolutions to a problem. It is not “Deus ex machina.” (One can even say that it is “Machina ex Deo...”)

Unlike Festinger, ¹⁴⁾ changes in cognition (and not changes in behavior), which found their expression in the Gospels, are stressed in this article.

In accord with Flusser, ¹⁵⁾ this article rejects the thesis that frustrated eschatological expectations (Parousieverzögerung) changed the structure of Christian faith. Instead, we recognize and accept the decisive role of Christ’s crucifixion and the resulting cognitive dissonance and its resolution.

In addition to the finding of determination of the chronological order of the Gospels’ writing, the application of this model led to a detailed organization, description, differentiation and construction of the early Christology in the New Testament, which is ground for further hypotheses and enrichment of the discussion.

14) See footnote 1.

15) See footnote 3.

THE UPSIDE DOWN TREE OF THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ CH. XV

An Exegesis

BY

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*ūrdhvamūlam adhaḥśākham
aśvattham prāhur avyayam
chandāmsi yasya paṇāni
yas tam veda sa vedavit*

*adhaś co 'rdhvam prasṛtās tasya śākhā
guṇapṛavṛddhā viśayapṛavālāḥ
adhaś ca mūlāny anusamītatāni
karmānubandhīni manuṣyaloke*

*na rūpam asye'ha tatho 'palabhyate
nā 'nto na cā 'dir na ca sampratiṣṭhā
aśvattham enam suvīrūḍhamūlam
asangaśastreṇa dṛdhena chittvā*

.....*The Bhagavadgītā, XV.1-3.*

Translation :

They say]that there is[an indestructible *aśvattha* tree with roots above and branches below, whose leaves are the Vedic hymns: who knows it is a knower of the Veda.

Its branches spread below and above, being nourished by the *guṇas* (i.e., the strands that constitute *Prakṛti* or Nature), objects of perception being its twigs. Its [adventitious] roots are produced below, in the world of man, bound to karma.

Its form is not obtained here as thus [or thus], nor its end, nor its beginning nor the ground [on which it is planted], once this *aśvattha* tree so well nourished [though it is], has been cut down with the mighty sword of non-attachment.

The question is, although the *aśvattha*, described here is the "Cosmic Tree", as all interpreters, both ancient and modern, agree, in what sense is it that? Is it in the ordinary sense of the visible universe only or perhaps in that sense, no doubt, *plus* in the sense of something more fundamental, that subtle human world which pervades the visible universe, tasted and felt in consciousness in the form of temperality, death, rebirth, etc., for which the word *saṃsāra* stands?

The symbol of the *aśvattha* calls for an exegesis. Parallels with the Cosmic Tree in other parts of the world known to us through the history of religion can mislead one into thinking that the *Gītā* is talking about the visible universe, its creation, implying the creator behind it, etc. The context of our exegetical effort here is some statements by R. C. Zaehner, which reveal a profound misunderstanding. Prof. Zaehner seeks to counter-balance the Cosmic Tree with the belief in one God, Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa, which he sees to be the essence of the *Gītā* teaching anyway! So he believes that here "the disciple is first asked to cut down the Tree of primordial creativity (*pravṛtti*) and then asked to take refuge in the very author of that Tree, 'from whom all things proceed (*pravartate*)' (10.8)" He also sees this as an important example of "mystical religion", as he adds, "this is, however, typical of mystical religion, and the Muslim mystic, for instance takes refuge in God's mercy against his wrath. In Hinduism it is not the divine wrath that hides the eternal from the eyes of the worshipper but his 'divine *māyā*' (7.14), his creative activity which conceals the timeless peace which is 'his changeless [all] highest' mode of his being (7.24)".¹

Etymology of the word aśvattha

In the *Atharva-Veda* there are references (5.4.3; 19.39.6) to the *aśvattha* being the home of the gods and being in the third heavenly sphere, viz., the *Varuṇa-loka*.²) The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (3.8.12.2) says "the tree is called *aśvattha* because *Agni* or *Yajna-Prajāpati* fell from the sphere of the gods (i.e., the *Deva-loka*) during the *pitṛyāna* (i.e., the path of the fathers), and taking the form of a horse (*aśva*)

1) R. C. Zaehner, *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, with a commentary based on original sources, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1969, p. 362.

2) *aśvattho devasadanāḥ tritīyasyaṃ itī tatrāmṛtasya cakṣaṇam devāḥ kuṣṭham anvataḥ* (The *aśvattha* tree is an abode of the gods; it grows in the third heaven; this tree which confers immortality was acquired by the gods.)

remained invisible in it for a year. The same is repeated in the *Anugītā* of the *Mahābhārata* (in *Anuśāsana Parva*, 85). Several etymologists have argued that *aśvattha* means horse-sable, because the horses of the sun took rest under it in the *Yama-loka* (the sphere of *Yama*) during the night of the *pitṛyāna*.

In the commentaries on the *Gītā* — particularly in those of Śankara and his followers — we find a radical philosophical etymology — as is usually the case when certain significant words are involved. Śankara's comment on *Gītā* XV.1, explains it as follows: *na śvo 'pi sthātā iti aśvattham, kṣaṇa pradhvaṁsam-aśvattham* — not abiding even till tomorrow (*śva*), destroyed momentarily — hence the word *aśvattha*.³⁾ It is further described as *saṁsāra-māyā* — the *māyā* of the cycle of *saṁsāra*.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his exposition (*vyākhyā*) of Śankara's comment carries it even further as he defines the word thus: *āśuvinaśatvena na śvo 'pi sthātā iti viśvāsānarham aśvattham* — on account of quick perishability and not deserving to be relied on, not abiding even till tomorrow — hence the word *aśvattha*. Śrīdhara makes this derivation even more emphatic, as he has it: *vinaśvaratvena śva prabhātaparyantam api na sthātayati iti viśvāsānarhatvād aśvattham prāhu* — they call it *aśvattha* because it is unreliable on account of the fact that it will not abide even till tomorrow morning.

Now it would appear on the surface, that the etymology of Śankara and his followers is far-fetched, but when we remember that there are so many links between *śva* (tomorrow), *aśva* (horse) and *āśu* (quick, fast and also — in the *Ṛgveda* — horse) it ceases to look fanciful. It will be recalled that 'the horses of the Sun' (*Chronos*) stands for time in Greek mythology also, and hence the association of the horse — and the sun — with speed and time will become irrepudiable. The horses of the sun resting during the night of the soul's progress in the path of the fathers (*pitṛyāna*) eventually becomes identified with the god of time (*Kāla*), who emerges finally as the mythological god of death. We are at his point inevitably brought to the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* where the imagery of the upside down tree occurs — evidently earlier than in the *Gītā* — the revealing god here being *Yama*, the official deity who pre-

3) All quotations from Śankara's *Gītā* commentary and the sub-commentaries of Anandagiri, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī and Śrīdhara are taken from the combined text edited by W. Laxman Shastri Paṇṣīkar, Bombay, Pandurang Jāwaji, 1936.

sides over death. When we bear all these associations in mind, the objections of recent writers including B. G. Tilak (*Gītārahasya*, English translation, p. 1136) that Śankara's etymology is far-fetched will cease to be valid. Śankara would seem not to be speaking from mere imagination as even Tilak suggests.

Aśvattha is no doubt tree but the word *vrkṣa* (tree) as such is used only once in the *Gītā* (X.26) — *aśvatthaḥ sarvaṣṭvarkṣāṇāṃ* (of all trees [I am] *aśvattha*) in the same way in which (Kṛṣṇa speaking of himself) “of *Rṣis*, I am Narada, of *Gandharvas* I am Citraratha, of *Munis*, Kapila, meaning either the primordial, the original or in some ways the most puzzling and mysterious member of each class of significant beings. In the Upaniṣads the word appears several times, e.g., *Kauṣītaki*, 1. 3 and 5. *Chāndogya*, 6.9.1; 6.11.1; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 3.9. 27 and 28; *Taittirīya*, 1.10.1; *Śvetāśvatara*, 3.9; 4.6 and 7; 6.6. In fact strangely, it does not occur in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, in which the parallel passages to the *Gītā* text is found.

The word *vrkṣa* (tree) has also been subjected to etymological treatment by Śankara in his *Kaṭha Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, a *propos* the text in the *Upaniṣad* II.3.1, 4) which has the notable similarity with the first *Gītā* passage about *aśvattha* (XV.1). Śankara writes: *vrkṣaśca vraścanāt* (the word *vrkṣa* [is used] owing to cutting down.). This etymology is given in the context of expounding *saṃsāra-vrkṣa* (*saṃsāra*-tree). Gopala Yatindra in his *Ṭika* (sub-commentary) expands Śankara's etymology even further: *saṃsāra eva vrkṣaḥ saṃsāravrkṣaḥ vrkṣa-śabda-pravṛtti-nimittam āha vraścanāt iti*. 5) (The tree [is] that which is indeed *saṃsāra*, that is the *saṃsāra*-tree; the word *vrkṣa* is spoken because of instrumentality of becoming [that is] due to its being cut down). Despite this kind of etymological elaboration, it is well to bear in mind that actually in the Upaniṣad text in question neither the word *saṃsāra* nor the term *saṃsāra-vrkṣa* nor the notion of cutting down appears. On the contrary the tree here is apparently Brahman. In the

4) *ūrdhva-mūlo 'vāk-śākha eṣo 'śatthas sanātanaḥ, tad eva śukram tad braham, tad evāmṛtam ucyate. tasmin lokāḥ śṛitāḥ sarve tad u nātyeti kaścana. etat vai tat.* With roots above and branches below (stands) this timeless *aśvattha*; that alone is the pure; that is Brahman; that alone is said to be immortal. In it all the worlds rest, and no one ever goes beyond it. This indeed is that.

5) *Kaṭhopaniṣad, with Śankara's commentary and its Ṭikas*, (Anandāśrama *saṃkṛta grandhāvalī* No. 7.), Poona, 1965, p. 109. This etymology is from the *Nirukta* of Yaska, 2.6.

Gītā the tree is *saṁsāra*. Is there, then a contradiction between the *Gītā* meaning and the *Kaṭha* meaning? Frankly, no, because *saṁsāra* is derived from lower Brahman, which is nevertheless Brahman. Lower Brahman can be seen in terms of *saṁsāra* as well as ultimate Brahman.

In this context we must inquire into the meaning of *chandāṁsi* (the Vedic hymns) in line 3 of the *Gītā* XV.1, where it is said that they (the Vedic hymns) are its (i.e., the *aśvattha*'s) leaves (*parṇam*). Śankara writes: "The *saṁsāra-vṛkṣa* is qualified thus: Its leaves are the leaves as it were of *Ṛk*, *Yajus* and *Sāma* (i.e., the three Vedas) and they protect or cover (*chad*) the *saṁsāra*-tree." He defines *chandāṁsi* in the following manner: *chandāṁsi chādanāt* (because of the function of covering they are called *chandāṁsi*).⁶ Here we may refer to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* I.4.2. "Verily, the gods when they are afraid of death entered the three-fold knowledge [for refuge]; they covered themselves with Vedic hymns (*chandobhir achādayan*). Because they covered themselves with these, therefore the hymns are called *chandas* (*chandasām chandas*)." In the fourth line of our principal text in question, i.e. the *Gītā* XV.1., it is said, "he who knows this is a knower of the Veda" (*yaś tam veda sa vedavit*), implying that the knowledge pertaining to the *saṁsāra*-tree is an inferior knowledge of covering and refuge in knowledge and also knowledge, otherwise not attainable, of something which calls for such refuge, namely the ontic terror.

The Kaṭha text and the Gītā text compared

It has become necessary for us to compare the two texts in the two respective scriptures where similar descriptions of the *aśvattha*-tree occurs. Two points of contrast are inevitably to be noted. (1) the *aśvattha* spoken of in the *Kaṭha* is Brahman itself, no doubt in its cosmic aspect, (2) there is no reference to cutting it down in the *Kaṭha*. With regard to the *Gītā* text the case is quite the contrary. The fact that the two passages are so strikingly similar and yet so different has puzzled several modern interpreters. It may very well be, as Zaehner holds, that one of them — the *Kaṭha* one most likely, is the original and the other is a modified copy. Zaehner is right in observing no contradiction "between the Cosmic Tree and the immortal Being which is its source."⁷ The question is, are the two texts different

6) Śankara's *Gītā* commentary (XV.1).

7) Zaehner, *loc. cit.*

as it were by accident while they ought to have been identical? Or, rather, is it possibly the case that these differences in the texts represent two aspects of the same truth concerning *saṁsāra*? Radhakrishnan observes: "The tree of life has its unseen roots in *Brahman*. The tree, roots and branches represent Brahman in its manifested form. While the tree of life is said to be imperishable *Brahman*, the *Bhagavadgītā*, which uses this illustration, asks us to cut off the tree of existence by the potent weapon of non-attachment."⁸) The tree of Brahman represented in the one, not depicted as cleavable, is pictured in the other as the tree of existence eminently deserving to be cut down.

Śankara in fact seems to assume that, far from being intentionally opposed or accidentally different, the texts are co-ordinated in the same ultimate ontology. Hence while interpreting the *Gītā* passage, he moves toward the *Kaṭha* passage with this observation: "[It is called] *ūrdhvamūlam* (with roots above) because of subtlety with respect to time, because of causality, because of eternality and because of *mahat-hood*. Hence the unmanifest Brahman is said to possess the power of *māyā*. That (i.e., the unmanifest Brahman) is its (i.e., the tree's) root. Hence this *saṁsāra*-tree has its roots above."⁹)

Śankara quotes a "Purāna" text, which is in fact a text (47:12-14) of the *Āśvamedha parva* of the *Mahābhārata*¹⁰) being part of the

8) Radhakrishnan, S. (ed.) *The Principal Upaniṣads*, London, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 1953, p. 642.

9) *ūrdhvamūlam kālataḥ sūkṣmatvāt- kāranatvāt-nityatvāt-mahatvātca-ūrdhvam, ucyate brahma avyaktam māyā-śaktimat, tanmūlasyaiti so 'yam saṁsāra vṛkṣa ūrdhvamūlaḥ.*

10) *avyakta-bīja-prabhavo buddhi-skandha-mayo mahān mahāhankāra-viṭapa indryāntara-koṣa. mahābhūta viśakhaśca viśesa prati-śākhavan sadā-parṇaḥ sadā-puṣpaḥ śubhāśubha-phalodayaḥ ajīvaḥ sarvabhūtānām brahmanvṛkṣa sanātanaḥ etat-chittvā ca bhūtvā ca jñānana paramāśinā. hūtvā cāmaratām prāpya jahyādyaḥ mṛtyujanmanī mirmamo nirahankaro mucyate nātra saṁśayah.*

From the *Mahābhārata, Āśvamedhikaparvan*, (critical edition) Poona, 1960.

Trans.:

The great tree of Brahman is timeless, having risen out of the seed of the Unmanifest, with *buddhi* (intelligence) for its trunk, the great ego for its branches, the senses for its sprouts, the great elements for its sub-branches, the sense-objects for its side-branches; ever covered with foliage and ever bearing

Anugītā. The discrepancies between the Śāṅkara quotation and the original are purely verbal, and inconsequential. The main reason for quoting the *Mahābhārata* text is to show that the reality represented by the tree is the lower (*saprapañca*) Brahman, and that even so Brahman is the ground or the real being of the tree and, vice-versa, the tree is the resort of Brahman. Ānandagiri observes in this context that the tree is grounded in Brahman, and also Brahman dwells in the tree and that because the tree cannot be cut without that knowledge it is called timeless and enduring.¹¹⁾

Now there is the mention of a tree in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, III.7-9. The question is, is there any connection between the *aśvattha* (the *samsāra-tree*) or the tree of Brahman and the tree in this particular Upaniṣad passage? The two seem wholly unrelated to each other except for the fact that the word 'tree' occurs in the latter too. Yet Zaehner thinks that in both the same concept of the tree exists, performing the same function. He further assumes that the theistic interpretation of the cosmos, which he obviously sees as implicit in the *Gītā*, the *Kaṭha* and the *Anugītā* texts has been made explicit in the *Śvetāśvatara* text; *apropos* the last of which he observes "it is God Himself who is the Tree."¹²⁾ The last-mentioned text does not support his interpretation as the actual statement in the *Upaniṣad* runs as follows: *vrkṣa iva stabdho divi tiṣṭhaty ekas tene'dam pūrṇam puruṣena sarvam* — (the *Śvetāśvatara* III. 9b) — *The one stands like a tree [established] in heaven; by Him [that is] the person [is] all this filled.*¹³⁾ "Tree", it is quite clear, is employed here purely as a simile for describing how the One stands. The fact "all this" (*idam sarvam*), the universe, is juxtaposed with "tree" is utterly without the particular kind of significance implied in Zaehner's interpretation. There is no reason at all why he should have been led to the *Anugītā* passage on the *aśvattha* from here as we note in his text. The two are thematically

flowers, producing fruits pleasant and unpleasant, it is fed upon by all creatures. Having felled it and split it with the sword of knowledge and attaining freedom from attachment to things that cause death and (re)birth, (the person) who is without the sense of "mine" and "I" attains *mokṣa*: as to this there is no doubt.

11) *brahmaṇā adhiṣṭīto vṣkro brahma-vrkṣastha api*

jñānam vīnā chedum aśakyatayā sanātanaḥ ciraṃtanaḥ

12) *Op. cit.*, p. 362.

13) Zaehner translates incorrectly: "Like a study tree firm-fixed in heaven he stands, the One, the Person, this whole universe full-filling", *op. cit.*, p. 363.

dissimilar.¹⁴) The *aśvattha* is a huge symbol for the *saṃsāra* and hence for the lower Brahman, in terms of which *saṃsāra* becomes something meaningful in spite of its transitoriness and its destiny of having to be cut down.

The Philosophical meaning of the aśvattha — Some preliminary proposals

The reason why the *aśvattha* appears to be important enough for a close scrutiny is that it stands as a symbol for the human cosmos (not so much the physical cosmos), the world of man, the *saṃsāra*, representing the endless round of birth, death and rebirth as well as old age, sorrow and bondage. The ancient thinkers were intensely aware of Ultimate Reality as such, that is, Brahman. And they were aware also of the world of becoming. The two cannot co-exist as two separate and equally true parts of reality. Nor can the two be treated as if there is no meeting at all. On an empirical basis what we know as life — along with birth, death, rebirth, old age and all other things which go with them — belongs to becoming. Yet the ancient thinkers found becoming to be not self-explanatory. The principle whereby it can be understood is the transcendent Brahman, *para brahman*. But as the *principle* of explanation *para brahman* has been already taken one step down from its pure transcendence to the status of a structure: hence *apara brahman*. This of course does not even imply any kind of dialectical self-alienation in a Hegelian thesis-antithesis manner. Brahman simply does not become. But insofar as the empirical basis of our understanding is the world of becoming Brahman must serve as the principle underlying it. The employment of Brahman as the principle in this manner is what gives rise to the concept of being. As a concept it is always answer to a question, whereas the Ultimate Reality *per se* is not answer to any question, much less a question. It simply is *that* and never a *what*. Insofar as becoming is the question being (*sat*) is the answer. *Saṃsāra* is the name for the total framework of becoming, constantly under the existential pressure to be put as a question. Brahman, the ground, is provided as the answer. This way

14) There is mention of "tree" in many places, and there are different kinds of trees; and at every instance "tree" occurs it is not necessary to assume that the *aśvattha* of the *Gitā* is intended.

we have an ontology not by virtue of any pressure that being puts upon becoming — there is no such pressure and indeed apart from becoming taken problematically there would be no need for the concept of being at all. There is, on the contrary, a pressure that comes from within the realm of *saṁsāra*, of becoming, and that is an existential pressure calling for an answer. Hence Brahman is to be understood as the ground of the tree of *saṁsāra*, and the tree inevitably grows downward. That tree is the *aśvattha* of the *Bhagavadgītā*. This has been pointed out by the present author in his book *Religion as Anxiety and Tranquillity*.¹⁵⁾ The symbol of the *aśvattha* then would seem to be a characteristic way of articulating ontology as an answer to the question that *saṁsāra* poses. Hence it is not to be construed as something “typical of mystical religion” as is done by Professor Zaehner.

It is in view of this ontology that the *aśvattha* is called both *saṁsāra*-tree and the tree of Brahman; and the two apparently different significances attached to the tree in the *Gītā* and the *Kaṭha* are not really contrary to each other. Because of this ontology the concept of God enters into it naturally, not in any partisan manner, however, to be construed as an expression of theism, so to say as against *Advaita*, as Professor Zaehner seems to see it. The concept of God is always natural and ontologically necessary for the *Advaita*. Brahman the ground or the root of the *saṁsāra*-tree is in that relation to be necessarily referred to as God. Hence there is no contradiction between Madhusūdana saying *saṁsāra-vṛkṣasya hi mūlam brahma* (Brahman is the ground of the *saṁsāra*-tree) and Śrīdhara saying *saṁsāra-vṛkṣasya mūlam-īśvaraḥ śrī nārāyaṇaḥ* (Īśvara, Śrī Nārāyaṇa is the ground of the *saṁsāra*-tree).¹⁶⁾ Again, God mediates between two eternities, one that belongs intrinsically with Brahman and another that belongs with becoming: hence the distinction between the *svarūpanityatā* (of Brah-

15) “The true foundations of Indian religious perspectives are the tranquillity structures mediated through the teaching (*dharma* in Buddhism and different *darśanas* in Hinduism); and the structures of suffering are placed as appendix to them, to be always seen from the tranquillity end like the upside down tree of the *Bhagavadgītā* with its roots above and branches below.” *Religion as Anxiety and Tranquillity*: An Essay in Comparative Phenomenology of the Spirit, The Hague and Paris, Mouton, 1972, p. 80.

16) In their respective sub-commentaries on the *Gītā*, in the context of the *aśvattha* text.

man) and the *pravāhanityatā* (of the cosmos). In terms of the former the *aśvattha* is perishable; in terms of the latter it is unending, ever-enduring.¹⁷⁾

The Philosophical significance based on survey of further texts

In order to understand the context in which the symbol of the tree as *saṁsāra* it will be well to go back to the Vedic texts. By doing so we will be able to perceive more clearly than otherwise two important philosophical truths contained in the *aśvattha* symbol, as we will learn of its very early genesis also:

1. The upside-down tree is no new innovation, its inverted position having been there from the genesis of the concept in the Vedas as representing, no doubt, clear anticipations of an ontology of the cosmos (rather than cosmology), re-appearing in the *Gītā*, the *Kaṭha* and the *Mahābhārata* (the *Anugītā*), expressing essentially what has been vastly more elaborately set forth in the Vedānta philosophy in subsequent times.

2. The ontology of the cosmos is something which goes hand in hand with a particular kind of self-knowledge, a wisdom by means of which as a sword is alone one able to deal with the world: knowledge is also detachment — hence *asaṅgaśastreṇa dṛdhena* (the *Gītā*) or *jñānena paramāsinā* (the *Anugītā*).

Let us consider these two philosophical points as presented in the Vedic literature.

1. In the *Ṛgveda* I.24.7, we have a very striking *mantra*: It is the oldest one referring to the tree. Ṛṣi Sunahśepa, while describing Varuṇa's greatness speaks of a tree that the latter planted in the bottomless (*abudhna*) with its roots above and branches below:

*abudhne rājā varuṇo vanasy
ordhvam stūpam dadate pūṭadakṣaḥ
nīcināḥ sthur upari budhna eṣām
asme antar nihitāḥ ketavaḥ syuḥ*

17) Madhusūdana writes, *sa ca saṁsāra vṛkṣaḥ svarūpeṇa vinaśvarah pravāharūpeṇa ca anantaḥ*; and Śrīdhara likewise writes, *sa ca saṁsāra-vṛkṣo vinaśvarah pravāharūpeṇa nityaśca*, loc. cit. in both cases

(King Vauṇa placed the orb of a tree in the bottomless in a downward position, with his holy power. Of these the roots remained above. They are the clues (*ketavaḥ*) concealed inside us.)

The domain of Indra is described as transcendent, not accessible even to the high-soaring birds (metaphorically standing for the flight of the intellect). But the clues are inside us. The poem goes on to describe how Varuṇa made the path for the sun to traverse.

This symbol of the tree is also evidently linked with the *R̥gveda* X.72.3, a poem connected with Bṛhaspati, where the famous image of *Uttānapada* (what has feet upward) occurs; it goes as follows:

devānam yuge prathame
'sataḥ sad ajāyata
tad āśā anv ajāyata
tad uttānapadas pari

(In the first epoch of the gods the existent arose from the non-existent. Afterwards arose the directions, whereafter [there grew] around [it] what has feet upwards.)

These two are the most express references to the tree (or the cosmos) with roots above (or feet upwards) and the body (or boughs) downwards. There are several other less express ones, which must be omitted from this investigation.

We meet with the upside down tree in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI.12.1) in the form of the *nyagrodha*.¹⁸) The word *nyagrodha* is made of two parts *nyag* (downward) and *rodha* (growing). (Markandeya Ṛṣi also is said to have seen *Īśvara* sitting on the branches of the *avyaya* tree (*vaṭavṛkṣa* or *nyagrodha*) at the time of the great Deluge). The great tree (*mahān nyagrodha*) — called so because it is the cosmos itself —, it is declared in the next verse, had arisen out of that extremely minute entity residing imperceptibly within the fruit

18) The object of inquiry is the fruit of the tree rather the tree itself.

nyagrodha-phalam ata āharet; idam bhagavaḥ iti;
bhindhīti; bhinnam bhagavaḥ; kim atra paśyasi iti;
anvaya ivema dhānāḥ bhagavaḥ iti; āsām
aṅgaikam bhindhanti; binna, bhagavaḥ, iti;
kim atra paśyati; na kim cana bhagavaḥ, iti.

(Bring hither a *nyagrodha* fruit; this my Lord. Break it. It is broken, my Lord. What do you see here? Extremely small seeds, my Lord. Break one of those. It is broken, my Lord. What do you see here? Nothing at all, my Lord.)

and the seed — (*etam aṇimānam na nibhālayase . . eṣo 'ṇimnā*, etc.).

2. Now the relation between the ontology of the cosmos and knowledge must be considered. Knowledge here is definitely an inward-turning knowledge, (which is the essential meaning of *jñāna*), a wisdom by means of which one achieves an existential disconnexion from the things which bind one to *saṁsāra*.

In the context of the tree planted by Varuṇa, described in the Sunaḥśepa hymn, the question is, what is above, namely the bottomless, where the roots are placed? We learn that it is light.¹⁹⁾ The root of the tree is in the region of light. But for gaining light man must seek clues within: the seeing of light is wisdom. Man comes to light by means of the inward quest, that is to say, the searching of consciousness.

The theme of searching within for knowledge — and freedom — come fully to light in the Upaniṣads (and re-stated in the *Gītā*, no doubt.) It was echoed faithfully by Śaṅkara.²⁰⁾ Cutting down the tree of the cosmos is not refusing to see it, but rather seeing it in the Self: he who sees so truly sees.²¹⁾

The tree of the Cosmos is not only mysterious but also fearful — not an object of comfort but of dread. And knowledge of the tree must comprehend the dread too; dread is an element of human and cosmic

19) The hymn of Sunaḥśepa was sung by him, we learn from the *Āitareya Brāhmaṇa* (the *Rgveda* does not recount the story) where he, the young boy that he was, was bound to the stakes to be sacrificed to Varuṇa; by this hymn he prays to Varuṇa for freedom and light (wisdom), and he found the answer: search within.

20) *ātmā tu satatam prāpto 'prāpyavadavidyayā
tannāśe prāptavad-bhāti svakanṭhābharanam yathā*

(The Self which is ever present, yet due to ignorance it remains unrealized, as a man looks for his ornaments which he is wearing on his neck). *Ātmabodha* of Śaṅkara, stanza 44. (See *Ātmabodha-Self-knowledge*, Swami Nikhilananda, Madras, Sri Ramakrishna Mutt, 1962, p. 207).

21) *samyagvijñānāvān yogī svātmanyevākhilam jagat
ekam ca sarvamātmānam-īkṣate jñāna-cakṣuṣā*

(The yogi endowed with complete wisdom sees the entire universe in his own self; through the eye of knowledge he sees everything as one), *Ātmabodha*, Stanza 47. (See *Ibid.*, p. 210).

*ātmaivedam jagatsarvamātmāno 'nyanna vidyate
mṛdo yadvad-ghaṭādīni svātmānam sarvam īkṣate*

(He knows the entire universe to belong to the Self, and to be nothing other; he sees everything to be of the Self just like things like pottery to be clay.) *Ātmabodha*, Stanza 48, (see *ibid.*, p. 211).

consciousness which must be brought to the open through knowledge. The *Kaṭha* Upanisad verses (II.3.2-3) following the one concerning the *aśvattha* speaks about it. In describing this there occurs the metaphor of the great fear, the upraised thunderbolt (*mahad bhayam vajram udyatam*) for the way the cosmos and its forces impress man. They who know it become immortal (*ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhavanti*), says the *Kaṭha* text.

Professor Zaehner does not omit to note the *Kaṭha* theme of fear in his exposition of the *Gītā* text under consideration, as he observes: "It may paralyze through fear, yet it is none the less the ladder by which and through which the immortal can be found." ²²⁾ But surely, the fear here described is not an individual fear, but one of a cosmic nature, governing the very principle by which the forces of the universe are sustained. This the *Kaṭha* verses in question make abundantly clear. Agni, Indra, Vāyu, Death (the physical forces as well as the deities) do their work through fear of Him (Ātman, Brahman). Śankara clarifies that the universe itself trembles in Brahman (*parasmin brahmaṇi saty ejati kampate*).

Yet the knowledge which comprehends the dread that moves the entire cosmos and all the forces in it — thus generating a genuine self-knowledge pertaining to man's situation in the universe of becoming — also liberates him from that dread. The dread is there in the first place as a vague, unclarified individual experience — an unexplored sense of the wrongness of existence, ²³⁾ which afflicts man, but its true ontological genesis and depth, its cosmic character, must be explored by means of knowledge. This constitutes part of the essential theological knowledge that Vedānta not only permits but warrants. To know the depth and the universality of dread, the point at which it touches the divine is an indispensable act of religious knowledge. ²⁴⁾ It must be complemented by another act of religious knowledge, that of taking refuge in God. Hence the *Gītā* enjoins:

22) *op cit.*, p. 362.

23) This theme is elaborated phenomenologically in the author's book, *Religion as Anxiety and Tranquillity*.

24) *na rūpam asye 'ha tatho 'palabhyate*
nā 'nto na cādir na ca sampratiṣṭhā

(Its form is not perceived here, nor its end, nor its beginning, nor its foundation) The *Bhagavadgītā* XV. 3. a, b.

*tatah padam na parimārgitavyam
 yasmin gatā na nivartanti blūyah
 tam eva cā 'dyam puruṣam prapadye
 yatah pravṛtīḥ prasṛtā purāṇī* ²⁵⁾

(Therefore, that path must be followed, from whence those who have walked it never return. And in Him, that Primal Person, I take refuge, from whom has flowed this ancient current [of the cosmos].

Knowledge is both the comprehension of Dread and the flight for Refuge, — fully these, and yet more. The thrust of knowledge according to the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* is not exhausted by these, however.

The experience of the dread and the taking of refuge are two co-ordinate steps, both being of the character of knowledge (*jñāna*), and focussed on the Divine. In both respects Sunḥśepa is the true Vedic prototype. And strangely, perhaps not so strangely, but rather as we should expect, the substance of this knowledge is built into the constitution of the cosmos, as the Vedas are its leaves — and the Vedas have meant shelter, refuge. And here we recall the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* I.4.5, where we read that “the gods fearing death took refuge in the three-fold knowledge (*trayīm vidyām*), i.e., the three Vedas. The Vedas were their cover, hence they are known by the word *chandas*. Knowledge has a paradoxical location in the cosmos. It is not alien, and yet it is alien, particularly insofar as it is the sword with which to cut it down. But the quest for understanding it must lead one inevitably to the complex doctrine of the Word — the world itself comes from the Word, which is another side of the matter.”²⁶⁾

Lastly, the purpose of doing this particular piece of exegesis has been to show that the real significance of the *aśvattha* symbol is something other than what is described by Professor Zaehner as “typical of mystical religion” and is not something into which an ultimate and terminal devotional theism can be read.

Professor Zaehner is right in calling attention to the theistic emphasis, but it is also necessary to make sure that that legitimate emphasis must not lend support to the view that the theism here is of a terminal or ultimate kind. The exegetical placing of the *aśvattha* is only one example of how the *Gītā* theism must be seen.

²⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, XV. 4.

²⁶⁾ *Vedānta-sūtras* I.3.28. But it is Brahman, not the Word, which is the material cause of the world.

THE DIALECTICS OF DESIRE

BY

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Desire (*kama*), as a force in human life and in the cosmos, is accorded great attention in Indian thought. Hindu myth and speculation give it a central role in creation. Seen as the chief motive power in the flowering of phenomenal life, it is widely celebrated both in lore and in worship. At the same time, no body of religious tradition appears so distrustful of desire as the Indian, nor speaks so emphatically of the need to annihilate it. Repeatedly and consistently, desire is set forth as the chief impediment to man's self-realization.

This dual stance, the celebration of desire and the condemnation of it, might appear contradictory, and the view of the creativity of desire to conflict with that of its destructiveness. This paper will suggest that this is not the case. It will endeavor to show that it is not so much a dichotomy we are dealing with here, as a profound respect for the power of desire and a search to understand and utilize its mechanics within different contexts. Views which appear dialectically opposite resolve, on closer approach, into patterns which reveal basic consistencies in the Hindu grasp of the nature and operation of this power. Among these consistencies, as this paper will point out, is desire's causal relationship to consciousness and in particular to the ego function.

A word, first, on terminology and definition. The Sanskrit word *kama* is often translated as sexual desire or assumed to mean only that. Its usage, however, is as broad as our English term desire, which in similar fashion is used often to denote lust, but which is by no means limited to that and carries connotations of wish, as well as passion and craving. (An exception to the above is the specific meaning accorded *kama* when it is treated as a *purusartha*, or goal of life. It then means pleasure itself, especially sexual pleasure, as we see in the Kama Shastra and the Kama Sutra; while such usage implies a

hankering *for* the pleasure, of course, it does not really denote the phenomenon of desire as such.) Looking at its uses and seeking a common denominator of valid meaning, I would propose the following definition: that *kama* or desire is, at root, a felt need for something, a wanting of something which is not yet in existence or not yet a part of oneself; it is the urge to remedy the sense of one's own incompleteness; it involves, therefore, by definition, an internal separation, a sense of duality between the subject and the object for which desire is felt.

DESIRE AS CREATIVE FORCE

"Covered by void, that which was coming into being,
That one was born through the power of heat (*tapas*).
Desire (*kama*), then, at first was evolved,
Which was the first seed of mind (*manas*)."

The speculative Vedic hymn RV 10.129, in what appears to be the first allusion to the cosmogonic function of desire, accords it a central and primal role. Desire is that which first emerges from the generative heat; it even precedes the formation of mind itself. Not only that, but the enigmatic and staggering assertion is made that desire constitutes the cause, the "first seed", of mind. No explanation of the causal relationship is given. Is desire the first thing consciousness does? its first self-actualizing movement? Or is desire the source of that duality in which mind then can operate?

These lines from the Rīg Veda hymn, which clearly represents intuitions born of yogic experience, strike two chords that will echo throughout developing Indian thought: desire's causal relation to consciousness and desire's link to that other form of energy, *tapas*, the heat of yogic austerities.

The Atharva Veda, that essentially magical body of literature, offers a wealth of recipes and formulae to ensure the blessings of the god, Kama. They witness to the archaic and largely pre-Aryan fascination with the mystery of sexuality and to a deep awe before the sacred act through which the gods continue creation. Here too the assertion is made: "Desire here came into being in the beginning, which as the first seed of mind." ¹⁾

1) Atharva Veda Samhita, tr. W. W. Whitney, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1962, AV 19, 52, 1.

Creation myths in the literature of the Brahmanas retain and reinforce the centrality of desire. Whether the desire is felt by the waters, the rishis or Prajapati himself, its function is unmistakable. "In the beginning truly, there was only the waters; all was fluid. They had a desire: 'How can we reproduce?' They toiled, they heated themselves (by *tapas*) ... a golden egg was produced."²) In other instances it is the rishis who create: "by having had desire they exhausted themselves with pain and austerity, therefore, they are the rishis ... Being kindled (by desire) they emitted seven males," who are later re-formed into Prajapati.³) Here, incidentally, desire is seen as precursor to *tapas*. Once Prajapati is on the scene, "one sentiment alone brings Prajapati to create: the desire for progeny, the need to multiply himself."⁴) His creative activity, which is originally by emission, often preceded by austerities, takes also the form of the sexual act. He copulates with his daughters, with Ushas or with Vac, whom he previously had emitted as part of himself—an unavoidably incestuous act, parallel to that which Brahma commits in later myths. An account in the Taittiriya Brahmana implies again a mutual causation between desire and mind and heat. "This universe was nothingness ... The non-being, which was alone, then made from itself a mind (by) saying: 'I wish to be.' It heated itself ..." ⁵)

Even in the Upanishads where desire is largely seen in a negative light as a hindrance to the soul, it is still, in the early literature, accorded a cosmogonic function. In the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad the world finds its genesis in desire, and desire, furthermore, through a sense of self, I am.

In the beginning this (world) was only the self, in the shape of a person. Looking around he saw nothing else than the self. He first said, "I am." Therefore arose the name of I ... He verily had no delight. Therefore he who is alone has no delight. He desired a second.⁶)

He enlarged, split and copulated with his newly emitted wife, from which union all beings were produced.

2) Satapatha Brahmana 11, 1, 6, 1, quoted in Sylvain Levy mss. on Le Sacrifice dans les Brahmanas, p. 2.

3) SB 6, 1, 1, 1-5, Levy, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

4) *Ibid.*, pp. 4-7.

5) *Ibid.*, citing Taittiriya Brahmana 2, 2, 9, 1-10.

6) BAU 1.4.1-3 from *Principal Upanishads*, tr. Radhakrishnan, Allen & Unwin, 1953.

... Therefore to this day a man [desires the same things—wife, sons, wealth]. So long as he does not obtain each of these he considers himself to be incomplete. 7)

This hardly implies that human desire is bad in itself, (as the Upanishads increasingly will); desire has, indeed, divine antecedents. It is a sense of incompleteness. The Upanishad, in keeping with its essentially monistic thrust, goes on in the verse to show how this need can be met and resolved on the spiritual plane; man can achieve the completeness he desires through meditation, by considering speech as his wife, breath his offspring, ear and eye his wealth. But the desires themselves are not evil or delusory.

The Vedanta philosophies, as they seek in later centuries to restore the spirit of the Upanishads, do not articulate any creative role for desire. One reason for this is that the business of higher philosophy, (as Chatterjee and Datta remind us in their consideration of Vedanta), 8) is the ground of creation, its what, not its why and how. In any case Shankara's strict monism permits no scope to cosmic desire. No relationship to desire could be predicated of Nirguna Brahman, or even of our own true natures: "For as long as something else remains, a desire is possible; but there is nothing else that could be desired in the absolute unity of Brahman." 9) Ramanuja's Vedanta, however, being qualified in its monism and according separateness to the individual soul in order to permit it to enjoy personal relation to Saguna Brahman, is more hospitable to the creative operation of desire. Establishing a philosophic basis for *bhakti* he also provides ground for *kama*. In opposition to Shankara's equation of consciousness with unity, Ramanuja argues that "all consciousness implies difference," as does each act of perception. 10) He echoes the implication seen in our Vedic verses, RV 10.129, that desire is the first seed of mind by virtue of the duality it occasions. From this perspective desire can be real, not delusory, and it can be creative.

If the ground of being, the "what," is the business of philosophy, the "why" and "how" are the business of poetry and myth. The tool

7) BAU 1.4.17, *op. cit.*

8) Chatterjee and Datta, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, Calcutta, 1968, p. 399.

9) *Vedanta Sutras w. Commentary by Sankaracarya*, II. i. 14, Radhakrishnan & Moore, *Sourcebook*... p. 529.

10) Ramanuja Commentary I.1.1., Radhakrishnan & Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 543.

is imagination, working the knowledge gleaned from yogic experience. In the Vedas we have seen that where creation is *ex nihilo*, desire has a formative role—in the literal sense. It is that which gives form. The formless has a need for form. It desires differentiation, it wants multiplicity and movement. The formless creates form through heat, the heat that is closer to nothing than to that of yogic austerities. The formless, the pre-existent turns itself, as it were, into a hot generator producing its own power. The power that is produced by the generator (the *tapas*), as well as that which fuels it, is, as we have seen, desire. ^{10a)}

Amidst the pantheon of deities then, giving form to the desire-to-give-form, appears Kama. Proud and beautiful adolescent, riding a parrot, he wields as his weapon a bow of sugar cane. Its bowstring is a line of bees, from which flower-tipped arrows are shot to the hearts of gods and mortals. ¹¹⁾ These shafts, bearing blossoms of heady fragrance, such as jasmine and mango, are five: they represent the five senses, and later on in Tantric elaboration five aspects of love. Along with these weapons Kama also carries a noose with which to lasso his victim from afar, and a hook to drag the victim near. ¹²⁾ Dancing Apsaras and Gandharvas attend him. His banner, red in color, features a fish, and the emblems he bears are conch-shell and lotus. These are all, of course, symbols of water—in homage, one concludes, to his powers of creativity. Rati (variously rendered as Pleasure and Lust) is Kama's wife, his daughter is named Thirst, his younger brother Krodha (Anger), and commanding his forces comes his general who is Vasanta (spring). ¹¹⁾ And it is in the spring that the festival of Holi celebrates the resiliency of his power. This annual village saturnalia has its obvious social function as safety valve, permitting dionysiac drives to spend themselves in a brief wild fling of disorder and freedom. But in so doing, it reveals many of the aspects of Kama that we have already observed: in the fires of Holi, in the

^{10a)} For the man of the West, of the Judaic-Christian tradition, it is strange to think of God creating the world out of his own need. The mythology of Genesis reveals no operation of desire; indeed, the notion of need or desire would seem to demean the Almighty. In the West, except for the mystics, there is little intimation, as in the East, that the Infinite needs the Finite, that formless, by its nature, desires form.

¹¹⁾ Alain Danielou, *Hindu Polytheism*, p. 312.

¹²⁾ Zimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

red paints and powders that are squirted, and in the homage paid to the creative force of nature. The burnings of his effigy, (often along with that of Rati) and his resurrection are reenactments of the year's cycle, symbols of life's return.¹³) Here is illustrated in lively form the dangerous proximity between creativity and chaos.

Any profile of this attractive and dangerous deity makes it clear that, at least in mythology, he represents one aspect of desire above all others—carnal lust, passion, and its sense-intoxicating, mind-drugging spell. That he should be featured as a divinity is only fitting in a society where sexual pleasure is a recommended ingredient in the life of the householder, and where the procreation of offspring is considered so vital to one's welfare after death. But Kama for all his usefulness has a hard time of it.

When it becomes clear to the gods that only a son born to Shiva can rid them of the demon Taraka, they send Kama to beguile Shiva into marriage. None of the gods has been invulnerable to those flowered arrows, and neither is Shiva, who is successfully tempted into union with Parvati—but not before he takes his vengeance on Kama. By a glance of his Third Eye the great Yogi of the Gods burns that arouser of passion to ashes. Made thus bodiless (Ananga) Kama becomes yet more pervasive in the world of gods and men, and his power even over Shiva is thereby increased. Shiva allows him to be reborn, as a son of Krishna, but the bones and ashes from his first incandescent encounter with the yogi, now constitute the moon.

GATEWAY TO HELL

Shiva burned Kama because Kama was inimical to Shiva's purpose. The coin turns to reveal its other side: desire, that creative power, the maker of multiplicity and manifestations, is also the enemy. He is the enemy to him who would back-track to unity, to him who would fight back up against the current of surging, spawning forms to the primordial motionlessness of the One. For whom the goal is not creation but freedom, the path is one, not of evolution, but involution.

This, of course, is a central theme of the Upanishads. When it is not more life that is sought, but release from life (and the entangling

13) Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Sexuality in the Mythology of Siva*, History of Religions, Vol. VIII, No. 4, Vol. IX, No. 1, University of Chicago, 1969, p. 22.

chain of lives), then desire must be eluded. For desire and attachment, by definition, bind man to the objects of his desire and attachment—and such bonds survive death.

He who, cherishing objects, desires of them, is born again here or there through his desires. But for him... who is established in the Self, all desires vanish here on earth.¹⁴⁾

Thus does the man that desires (transmigrate). But as to the man who does not desire, who is without desire, who is freed from desire... his breaths do not depart. Being Brahman he merges in Brahman.¹⁵⁾

Desires can be vanquished, because they are in essence illusory, false needs to a creature whose true nature is Atman.

(The Self) is that which transcends hunger and thirst, grief, delusion, old age and death. Having realized this Self brahmins give up the desire for sons, the desire for wealth and the desire for worlds and lead the life of mendicants.¹⁶⁾

If a man knows the Self as "I am This", then desiring what and for whose sake will he suffer in the body?¹⁷⁾

This perspective on desire as delusion and entanglement arises from the yogic experience. Religious life centered in worship and sacrifice is spared any such stark encounter with the dark side of desire. But yogic introspection casts upon *kama* an austere and merciless light. In the writings pertaining to Samkhya and Yoga desire is seen in one light only—negative. Not just some desires are bad, but any desires at all. Through the yogin's wish to stop life, to escape from it, *kama*, that potent life-force, has fallen into ill-repute.

The Samkhya and Yoga system would appear to deny any creative function whatsoever to *kama*. For, given the essential and eternal distinction between the passive *Purusha* (spirit) and the evolving *Prakriti* (matter), who and what would desire? *Prakriti* could not desire, being mindless, without consciousness of its own, nor could the *Purusha*, being aloof and unmoved. Neither can desire, just as neither can create by itself. It is their proximity only which causes in the unfolding of matter the emergence of *buddhi* (awareness) and then *ahamkara* (ego-consciousness).¹⁸⁾ The Samkhya philosophy appears,

14) Mundaka Upanisad III.2.1-2 (*op. cit.*).

15) Brhadaranyaka Up. (BAU) IV.4.6.

16) BAU III.5.1.

17) BAU IV.4.12.

18) Samkhya Karika XX, as quoted w. commentary by Gerald Larson.

from this standpoint, so inhospitable to the creative operation of desire that one is tempted to see it as a result of yogic bias, a kind of manichean irritation at the tenacity of desire.

Such distrust of desire does not, however, represent a departure from India's old recognition of *kama's* creative power. A closer look at the principle of *ahamkara* reveals the workings of desire in the evolution of nature, *Prakriti*. That I-sayer, I-maker, is not only the agent which brings to be the physical and mental worlds, but it does so by its very delusion: its notion of separateness and incompleteness.¹⁹⁾ Feeling needy it makes: spawns mind, sense perceptions and sense objects. The Vedic poet's claim that desire generates mind finds here in Samkhya a philosophic elaboration of sorts, although one which carries a devalorization of creation that is in no way implied in the Vedic view.

Patanjali in his Yoga points out how the *ahamkara*, begetter and begotten of desire, deludes us. "To identify consciousness with what merely reflects consciousness—this is egoism."²⁰⁾ The ego mistakenly identifies the self with experience, and by thinking thereby "*I am happy, I am unhappy*" becomes the source of all pain and distress. It conceives of itself as subject, rather than object. And it is in desire more than in any other mental movement that this mistake is made, and the illusion created of the "I" as subject.

As *ahamkara* conducts its creative activity by means of the three *gunas*, these strands of evolutionary process are seen as the raw material of desire. (And conquest of desire necessitates, in turn, discrimination between the *Purusha* and the *gunas*.)²¹⁾ With predominance of *sattva* mind and sense organs are created, and thanks to *tamas* the grosser forms of phenomenal life. But the energy that empowers all this evolution of *prakriti* is that of the *guna rajas*. The linkage of *kama* to *rajas* is evident throughout Indian thought, and made explicit in the Gita. *Kama* is "of *rajas*", and *rajas* is "of the nature of *kama*."²²⁾ Already we have seen how from the beginning *kama* appeared as energy, linked with heat and fire. His banner of red

19) Samkhya Karika XXIV, Larson, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

20) Zimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

21) Vyasa's commentary on Patanjali I.16, Woods, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

22) Bhagavad Gita XVIII.24, 27, 34; XIV.5-8. tr. Edgerton.

(the color of *rajas*) and his brother Krodha (anger) further witness to *kama*'s rajasic character.

All the above factors, the rajasic character of desire, its cause-and-effect relationship with the delusions of *ahamkara*, its road block on the path to liberation, find clear elaboration in the Bhagavad Gita. Krishna states without ambiguity his judgment on desire. What drives man to sin? asks Arjuna, "even against his will, as if driven by force?" "It is *kama*", answers the god, "it is anger, arising from *rajas*, all consuming, very sinful; know that this is the enemy here." Desire is "an insatiable fire", "the eternal foe of knowledge," the "great-armed one." ²³⁾ He speaks of it as the soul's ultimate peril. "This is of hell the threefold gate and ruins the soul: desire, wrath and greed (*lobha*)", ²⁴⁾ but the worst of these three and most basic, as Krishna makes clear, is desire. It is desire that gives rise to wrath; ²⁵⁾ it is desire which deprives man of knowledge; ²⁶⁾ it is desire for which he even condemns the Vedic ritualizers—for their "nature is desire", being "intent on heaven." ²⁷⁾

That desire is fed by the *ahamkara*, and operates through it, is made clear in the Gita "This have I gained today, this desire shall I get, mine is this, and mine also this wealth again is going to be; yonder enemy has been slain by me, and I shall slay others too; I am lord, I control enjoyments, I am successful, mighty, happy; I am rich, of noble birth; who else is like unto me?" . . . Thus they say deluded by ignorance." ²⁸⁾ "He whose soul is deluded by the *ahamkara* imagines 'I am the agent' ". ²⁹⁾ And Krishna cautions Arjuna, "If through *ahamkara* thou wilt not heed, thou shalt perish. . . . If clinging to *ahamkara* thou thinkest 'I will not fight', vain is thy resolve." ³⁰⁾ It is indeed through perceiving the entangling interrelationship between desire and the "I" that man can begin to liberate himself. The Gita does not counsel that man deny or repress his desires as much as recognize that the I-factor that desires is fictitious. "Renunciation is

23) Bhagavad Gita (BG) III. 36-7, 39, 41, 43. Radhakrishnan translation.

24) BG XVI.21. Radhakrishnan translation.

25) BG II.62. Radhakrishnan translation.

26) BG VII.20. Radhakrishnan translation.

27) BG II.43. Radhakrishnan translation.

28) BG XVI.13-15.

29) BG III.27.

30) BG XVIII.58-9.

hard to obtain without discipline. (But) Disciplined . . . his self become (one with) the self of all beings, even acting he is not stained. 'I am in effect doing nothing at all!'—so the disciplined man should think, knowing the truth, when he sees, hears, touches, smells, eats, walks, sleeps . . . 'the senses only on the objects of sense are operating.'"³¹) "Thinking only 'the *gunas* operate' (he) remains firm and unshaken."³²)

So Krishna has found a way to reject desire, with all of its perils, without rejecting action. Indeed a central message of the Gita is that it is neither action nor non-action that impedes, but one thing only: desire for the fruit of action. And how is this done? How is action purged of desire? By turning one's actions into sacrifice,³³) they are burned up in the fire of knowledge, unbound and unbinding. Such sacrifice detaches the deeds from the doer and gives them, as Eliade puts it, a "transpersonal value."³⁴) Thus "free from wishes, . . . content with getting what comes by chance . . . he does acts for worship (sacrifice) only."³⁵) "Abandoning all desires, without self-interest and egotism, he attains peace."³⁵)

Distrust of desire becomes even more central in Buddhism; indeed it is the Second Noble Truth that desire (as *tanha*, craving) is the cause of suffering. It is the disease from which mankind must be cured and awakened. Without going into Buddhist thought in any detail, two developments that it brings to the consideration of desire should be mentioned.

First, the creative force of desire is paid even greater respect—not in the cosmic realm, for such speculation is avoided, but in the psychological realm. Desire molds us. What we think and what we want is what we become. "All that we are is the result of what we have thought", says the Dhammapada. Our thoughts and desires cause pain to follow us as "the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage."

Secondly, the figure of Kama merges with that of death. In Mara, the great tempter and destroyer, coalesce the Hindu elements of *kama* and *mṛtyu* (death), creating a personification of evil that, as Trevor

³¹) BG V.9.

³²) BG XIV.18.

³³) BG IV.

³⁴) Mircea Eliade, *Yoga*, Bollingen 1958, p. 157.

³⁵) BG II.71.

Ling points out, has no parallel in Hinduism.³⁶⁾ In the Marasamyutta, which tells of the tempting of the Buddha under the Bo tree, the names by which the Evil One is addressed are related to death, but his actions, in seeking to distract the Sakyamuni, are those of Kama. He who distracts—from meditation, from the path—is desire, and his true name is destroyer.³⁷⁾ Zimmer notes that one of the names applied to Kama in these Buddhist legends is that of an old Vedic demon, Namuci. The name is interpreted as “he who does not (*na*) let go (*muc*)”, which shares a common root, *muc*, with *moksa*; he is the one who leads men to death. And Zimmer speaks of the inevitable relationship thus: “Kama and Mara, the joy of life and the grip of death, are respectively the bait and the hook—the delights of the loaded table and the price to be paid—the dinner and the check, which here is mortality, suffering, and tears.”³⁸⁾

THE USES OF DESIRE

For all its recognition of the dangers of desire, the Hindu tradition, in the last analysis and in contrast (by and large) to Buddhism, does not seriously propose that desire can be swept aside. For all its drive to back-track to the formless unity that was before desire, Hinduism does not pretend to annihilate it. Perhaps that is because the Hindu respect for desire is too strong. Thanks to Shiva, the affirmation is made—and reiterated in many ways—that desire is with us, in us, of us and cannot be escaped.

One human response, of course, is just to accept it and give into it. A comfortable place for *kama* is made in the Carvaka or Lokayata philosophy of materialism. Deliberately ignoring the warnings of the Gita, the Upanishads, the yogis and other spiritual spoil-sports, the affirmation is made that “the only end of man is enjoyment produced by sensual pleasures.”³⁹⁾ *Kama* is elevated to the goal and purpose of life and “the three Vedas are a cheat.” “Fools are deceived by the lying Sastras, and are fed with the allurements of hope. But can begging, fasting, penance, exposure to the heat of the sun, which emaciate the body, be compared with the ravishing embraces of women with large

36) Trevor Ling, *Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil*, p. 46.

37) *Ibid.*, p. 65.

38) Zimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

39) *Sarvadarsanasamgraha*, excerpted in Radhakrishnan & Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

eyes, whose prominent breasts are compressed within one's arms?" "Such are the fooleries of these unenlightened men. They conceive you ought to throw away the pleasures of life, because they are mixed with pain; but what prudent men will throw away unpeeled rice which incloses grain because it is covered with the husk?" 40)

The testimony of gods and gurus, saints and yogis, no to mention personal experience, is, however, inescapable for the soul bent on self-realization. *Kama* is delusive, dangerous, death-dealing. What is to be done with it? For sudras and women, for the common run of men in the householder stage of life, its pleasures are all very well—but how is the devotee, the searcher after the one true Self, to deal with this undeniable force? The Hindu tradition, as it unfolds, appears to offer the searcher three alternatives—presented in schools of thought which contrast with each other but which share a common acknowledgement of desire's presence and power. The three uses of desire, then, appear to be these: One can burn it, transforming it into fuel for one's liberating austerities. One can sublimate it into devotion to the Lord. Or one can exploit it—moving straight into it to experience the bliss and unity that exist eternally at the heart of creation.

On the face of it, austerities hardly seem to constitute a use of desire. Indeed, the aim and claim of *tapas* appears to be the extinction of desire. There is clear evidence, however, particularly in mythic form, that ascetic endeavor is not a mere denial of *kama*, as if that force did not exist, as if it could be wished away or the wires cut; but that it is in effect a harnessing of that burning power.

Shiva, that ambiguous, concupiscent yogi of the gods, makes such an argument easier to present. As disciplined and as extreme as he is in his austerities, he still recognizes the power of *kama*—and not only recognizes it, but, in his eruptions of sexuality, comes in effect to symbolize *kama* in all its untamed power. He is a figure of constant tension, unexpected, unpredictable, drawn taut between Hinduism's homage to *kama* and its austere rejection of it. Ms. O'Flaherty points out that the Shiva myths, by embodying this tension in a single figure, serve to ease it—to reconcile what, on the social level, appears mutually exclusive. As Krishna says, in ordering Shiva to marry, "You cannot

40) *Prabodha-Candrodaya*, (The Rise of the Moon of Intellect), an ancient drama excerpted in Radhakrishnan & Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

be merely an ascetic; in time you will be a householder and a man of *tapas*, as you wish.”⁴¹⁾

This tension, we must remember, is not in the last analysis between opposites, but between alternate forms of heat. We have noted above, from the Vedas onward, the interplay between *kama* and *tapas*. The myths go further to reveal that one can reinforce the other, that they are moreover mutually necessary in correcting dangerous one-sided excess. In proof of the latter point are the myths which figure the necessary “taming” of ascetics by *kama*, where the extremity of their *tapas* threatens drought, fire and destruction.⁴²⁾ As to reinforcing each other, numberless legends of yogis illustrate that *tapas* can build sexual as well as moral power. That erotic indulgence can also, in turn, pave the way for austerities, is suggested by Parvati’s comment to Shiva, “My lord, having made love to you for many years, I am satisfied and your mind has withdrawn from these pleasures. I wish to know your true nature, that frees one from rebirth.”⁴³⁾ The myth of the Pine Forest⁴⁴⁾ could perhaps be understood to suggest that the ineffectiveness of the austerities of the ascetic sages, whom Shiva ridicules and cuckolds, is related to their complacent and rather dim-witted distance from the erotic facts of life.

In general, however, it is not through its indulgence that *kama* serves *tapas*, but through its unspent tension. Burned within the yogi it fuels his austerities. Its ashes with which he smears himself testify to its importance and might. O’Flaherty maintains that Shiva’s raised phallus represents chastity and semen retention more than priapism. The very power of *kama*, concentrated and consumed in the *linga*, can force the door, bringing the yogi into contact with that same creative power in the core of being.

When Krishna first elaborates the yoga of bhakti in the Bhagavad Gita he makes no attempt to harness the power of *kama* in its behalf. The devotion which he praises and calls forth is heart-felt and open to all, but it does not aim to tap the pools of passion. That comes later. By the time of the Bhagavata Purana *kama* has emerged in all its heart-

41) O’Flaherty, *op. cit.*, p. 34 quoting Brahmapurana 1.6.1-40.

42) *Ibid.*, p. 313-18.

43) *Ibid.*, p. 333, citing Siva Purana 2.2.23.7-8.

44) Recounted in O’Flaherty, *op. cit.*, p. 307-8.

ensnaring power to offer its services to the worship of the deity. No longer is *bhakti* the quiet contemplation of the Gita. Instead it is consuming fires of longing, the sense-fed yearnings of the gopis, their inconsolable desire for the loveliness of the spirit and flesh of Krishna. So strong is their amorous desire that all other desires are swept away. The devotees' focus on their Lord is total, single-hearted—because into the current of their devotion flows the power of *kama*. And there it is neither consumed nor repressed, it is transferred *in toto* to God, to be transmuted, with very little refining, into *bhakti*.

Keeping this desire at fever pitch is the fact that it is never gratified as more earthly lusts can be. The adulterous passion of the gopis never finds its satisfaction, indeed the assumption is that if the gopis could have had Krishna they would not have wanted him so much. In the *rasa-lila* dance Krishna disappears from the side of a gopi whenever she thinks, “he is mine”, and only when her longing mounts again does he reappear. So here we find *kama* being used and valued for those very aspects for which it was earlier condemned, to wit its insatiability and gnawing restlessness. And whereas Upanishadic and yogic thought saw desire as whetting and exacerbating the ego-function, Vaishnavite *bhakti* maintains that its use of desire “draws the mind away from the satisfaction of the self.” Dimock says that the Bhagavata Purana, orthodox Bengal Vaishnavism's basic text, shows that “separation of lovers is the best illustration of the proper attitude of the worshipper toward God, . . . because it increases the desire for the loved one, and because intense and selfless desire for God is to the Vaishnavas a saving grace.”⁴⁵) The worshipper is thus transformed “from an ordinary earthbound creature to a lover of the Lord.”⁴⁶)

The uses of *kama* in Tantrism are bolder, riskier and more freighted with philosophy. Instead of running counter to some of the Vedic and post-Vedic insights about the nature of *kama* and its relation to the ego, as Vaishnavite *bhakti* seems to, Tantra would incorporate them, according to its lights,—and take them to their logical limit. If *kama* is the primal cosmogonic force, then through the ritual use of that force its power can be appropriated, and the unity tasted from which it

45) Edward Dimock, *Place of the Hidden Moon*, Chicago, 1966, p. 11.

46) *Ibid.*, p. 23.

sprang. Since attachment and craving are the pitfalls of the soul, then *kama* shall be indulged without addiction, the sages partaking of its pleasures as they occur, with detachment. 47)

Kama is seen in the light of that single incandescent point where opposites meet. Whether you call the polar principles Shiva-Sakti, Krishna-Radha, Shiva-kundalini, or *prajna-upaya*, it is all the same. "Every conjunction of opposites produces a rupture of plane and ends in the rediscovery of the primordial spontaneity." 48) This union of opposites, celebrated in meditation or in *maithuna*, produces Maha-sukha (the Great Bliss) and Samarasa (Experience of Unity). 49) It is the bliss and unity and innocence of the world before life became dual. Such is the *sadhana* or realization of Tantra when within the disciple's own body the polar principles reunite. So does *kama*, rarefied now and fraught with metaphysical import, become the very vehicle of liberation.

In Sahajiya Vaishnavism *kama* in its more usual human sense is only seen as a starter, it becomes transformed into *prema*, the divine love. 50) It is that love which calls us to unity with the godhead and has given us in our natures the means to achieve it. As Dimock expresses the Sahajiya view, "Krishna is indwelling in man as the divine principle. The nature of Krishna is love and the giving of joy; therefore the true nature of man is also love and the giving of joy, it is this in man's nature that is to be realized and experienced." 51)

Tantra does not always feel the need to transmute *kama* into anything more ethereal, or infused with *bhakti*. Even the metaphysics of oppositional principles seems superfluous when we read from the *Guhya-samaja Tantra*, "No one succeeds in attaining perfection by employing difficult and vexing operations; but perfection can be attained by satisfying all one's desires." 52)

Yes, the god with the flowered arrows is alive and well, and probably smiling. As the myth said, the incineration by his intimate enemy Shiva only rendered him more pervasive and potent. This knowledge seems

47) *Gopala-uttara-tapini Upanisad* 15, quoted by Danielou, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

48) Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

49) *Ibid.*, p. 268.

50) Dimock, *op. cit.*, pp. 53, 155-7.

51) Dimock, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

52) Quoted by Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

to be shared by ascetic, devotee and householder alike. Whether one sees *kama* as doorway to being or gateway to hell, whether one seeks merely to enjoy *kama* or whether one strives to transmute it into spiritual energy, religious devotion or cosmic insight, it enjoys a respect that has no parallel in Western thought. It is a recognition of desire's centrality in the cosmos and in the ego, and a deep acknowledgement of its awesome power.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON THE METHODOLOGY OF THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

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Some years ago publications on the theory and method of the science of religion were scarce (Rudolph, 1962: 199). Recently, however, the situation has been changing. The number of methodological writings seems to increase from year to year. They range from introductory chapters in multi-volume handbooks of the history of religions (e.g., Brelich, 1970), to articles in journals, anthologies (Capps, 1972; Waardenburg, 1973; Lanczkowski, 1974; Mann, 1973), and to monographs dealing either with particular aspects of the history of religions (e.g., Baird, 1971) or with a systematic exposition of the study of it as a whole (e.g., Bianchi, 1970; Meslin, 1973). Several of these works are the result of study conferences or symposia devoted to the discussion of methodology. The collection of papers presented at a symposium in 1968 in the Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes, published by Desroche and Séguy (1970), occasioned an analysis by A. Saucerotte in *Les Cahiers du Centre d'études et de recherche marxistes* (1972). Among the symposia, the two most recent ones were the Study Conference of the I.A.H.R. in Turku, Finland, in August 1973, and the symposium on "Methodology and World Religions" held in the School of Religion of the University of Iowa, USA, in April 1974. Their proceedings are to be published in the near future.

The current interest in questions of methodology may be a symptom of serious difficulties within the field, or of the need to come to terms with "the problems posed by a new situation, problems for which the old methodology . . . has been proven inadequate", or of both (Sharpe, 1971b: 1). In any event, the very fact that the interest is there and finds expression in such a great number of publications and study sessions, is an indication that there is a need for the rethinking of basic concepts and assumptions. A theory or overall strategy of the

badly underdeveloped systematic study of religion (Rudolph, 1973: 404; Smart, 1973b: 4; 1973a: 11) will only be developed if the *Grundlagenforschung* is intensified. According to Smart, "we are still in an early stage in the study of religion" (1973b: 158). In a way, the new synthetic methods that have often come to replace precise and first-hand scholarship (Sharpe, 1971a: 1), approach again the old style of "crypto-apologetics or elevating poetry" (Smart, 1973b: 159), hardly a desirable goal for a science of religion.

Nevertheless, there are scholars in the field of religion who are impatient with those who concern themselves with problems of methodology. In fact, some see the work of the history of religions threatened by what they consider an exaggerated emphasis on theoretical matters. In particular, W. C. Smith at the symposium in Iowa University expressed serious reservations in this regard. He maintains that method is something one learns at the beginning of one's studies, absorbs and practices then unconsciously as a matter of fact. In all subsequent work, therefore, intensive reflection on it is not only unnecessary but actually obstructive to the research into the subject matter. Thus, in his opinion, the present concern with methodology has resemblances with scholasticism in the pejorative meaning of the term, i.e., the narrowing down of the focus of the scientific work to more and more minute questions that have less and less to do with the religious reality which is the proper object of research. Even though there is some truth in what Smith has to say, it must be pointed out that, first, by far not all and every historian of religions focusses exclusively on questions of method; on the contrary, theoreticians are always in the minority compared to those working on the "subject matter". Secondly, if method refers to more than the mere mastery of basic scientific procedures such as the delineation of one's area of research, using adequate definitions, being aware of the limitations of a given approach, practising sound philology, etc., it must be admitted that much remains to be done. In other words, while there is virtually general agreement as to what constitutes sound scientific study of religious traditions, the area of theories and category formation in the science of religion is far from being sufficiently developed. From the questions around a definition of religion (should it be functional or stipulative, for instance) to that of the validity of structuralism, functionalism, phenomenology, etc., and the problem

of understanding and explanation in the science of religion, there is much that needs continuous rethinking.

The following is an attempt to bring together some of the most recent writings on methodological issues by discussing certain key concepts in the science of religion. Primarily the account is based on the following works: Baird (1971); Bianchi (1970); Bianchi, Bleeker, Bausani (1972); Brelich (1970); Desroche and Séguy (1970); Meslin (1973); Ratschow (1973); Smart (1973a; 1973b). They have been chosen because they represent a cross-section of recent theoretical reflections, coming from different countries and exemplifying different methodological orientations.

The Problem of Defining Religion

The "perennial" question of the definition of religion is one of the three fundamental concepts that Baird tries to clarify in his book *Category Formation and the History of Religions* (1971). After discussing different types of definition (5-16), he offers a functional definition, i.e. "Religion is *ultimate concern*" (18), whereby he defines "ultimate" as "a concern which is *more important than anything else in the universe for the person involved*" (18). He explicitly excludes any reference to an "ultimate reality" implied in the definition as used by Tillich. This ultimate reality as the objective point of reference in any given ultimate concern is not part of historical research (18). While all this is true, it is not likely that Baird's understanding of functional definition will be accepted by many. He understands functional definition as "the act of stipulating that a certain word means a certain thing" (6). And even though he calls them "semi-arbitrary" since "they are not formulated in ignorance of the data" (7), he does use them as stipulative definitions. That this is so, becomes clear from his insistence on the fact that functional definitions are not to be modified as more and different data become available in the course of historical research (e.g., 7). What Baird wants historians of religion to avoid or discard is the so-called "essential-intuitional method" which "proceeds as though the word 'religion' corresponds to something that has univocal ontological status, that the word is unambiguous, and that the reality or essence which it names is intuitively identifiable" (2). Even though much of the research on

religion actually was and is carried on in the manner indicated by Baird, the adoption of a stipulative definition and its consistent use will not be satisfactory either. The fact that a definition in order to be useful needs to take into account the researcher's *Vorverständnis* is of greater importance than Baird attributes to it.

The term "functional" definition as Baird uses it is not meant in the same sense in which Bianchi refers to it in his article "The Definition of Religion" (1972); i.e., in Baird's usage a functional definition is not "'reductive', i.e. destined to 'explain' and 'solve' religion . . . in motivations of a sociological and psychological order" (Bianchi, 1972: 16). Bianchi himself wants to solve the definitional problem in a dialectical manner, i.e. by uniting the two requirements "to possess already a certain idea of religion when we are studying the 'religious' concepts and practices of humanity, and the need for us not to take our start from preconceived and theoretical definitions, but to construct rather a definition basing ourselves on an inductive and positive enquiry" (20). "Religion" is, according to Bianchi, a term that is used "analogically" for phenomena that have at the same time something in common but differ in other respects (24, 28; cf. Bianchi, 1970: 7 f.). Consistent with his views on the character of a definition of religion, Bianchi does not propose one himself. He does, however, reject those attempts at defining religion that refer to "ultimate concern", "the sense of absolute", and "the sacred" (15), as he has done in his earlier work *Probleme der Religionsgeschichte* (1964).

"Relationship with the sacred" is still used as a definition of religion in Meslin's book *Pour une science des religions* (1973). *Das Heilige* of Otto seems to assert a strong influence in this respect on many historians of religion even in our days. To define religion as man's response to, or relationship with, the sacred either implies a theological or ontological understanding of the sacred, or, in the absence of such an understanding, requires a definition of it. This was rightly pointed out by Baird (1971: 3 f., 19). Mostly, "the Sacred" is not defined at all; sometimes it is said that the sacred cannot be defined but only experienced. It is obvious that one thereby leaves the realm of scientific research.

The theologian C. H. Ratschow distinguishes three ways of "perceiving" religion: the theological, the philosophical, and the religio-

scientific. "Die Religion der Religionswissenschaft ist nur in den Religionen da!", and these religions are a "spezifisch gearteter Teil jeder großen Kultur, in dem sich das Ahnen, Sehnen und Wissen der Menschheit um den Grund und die Grenze ihres Daseins ausspricht" (Ratschow, 1973: 347). Why religions are only part of "great civilizations" remains unintelligible. In any case, the *Sanctum* of the religions is the god (353). Thus, Ratschow conceives of religion as man's relationship with a divine reality, god or gods. A distinction between religions and Christianity (355) can only be made on theological grounds, but has no justification in the framework of history of religions (cf. Ferré, 1970: 7).

Schlette's definition of religion as man's ability to commit himself to something that has absolute validity for him because it concerns him absolutely (1971: 174), is too vague to be useful or functional.

Despite the definitions discussed so far, there seems to be a general trend towards definitions or at least characterizations of religion that take into account not only its cognitive and/or affective aspect, or its intended object, but try to incorporate the social, behavioral, psychological, etc., dimensions. This is the case with Pye (1972: 10, 12), Smart (1973a; 1973b), and van Baaren (1973). Smart's definition may serve as an example here: "A religion, or the religion of a group, is a set of institutionalized rituals identified with a tradition and expressing and/or evoking sacral sentiments directed at a divine or trans-divine focus seen in the context of the human phenomenological environment and at least partially described by myths or by myths and doctrines" (1973b: 15; cf. Smart, 1973a: 42 f.; 1969: ch. 1). Such a procedure seems to be the most fruitful one within a scientific study of religion in the present circumstances. In any event, the days where multi-volume histories of religions could be written that did not contain any attempt at defining the research object (cf. Baird, 1971: 3), are past.

The Category of Understanding

This is also one of the key concepts in the science of religion. The influence of J. Wach's work in this regard is well known and needs no elaboration here. Baird devotes ch. 4 (1971: 54-125) to the category of understanding. He points out that understanding is complex and can

take place on several levels (125). Accordingly he distinguishes between functional (Malinowski), phenomenological (Eliade), personal (W. C. Smith), normative (H. Kraemer, H. Küng, and S. Radhakrishnan), and religio-historical understanding. The last one Baird defines functionally as "any valid knowledge about religion communicable in propositional form" (59). By "valid knowledge" he means "descriptively true statements" (59 f.). Religious experience as a necessary ingredient of the methodology of a historian of religions is ruled out by Baird. He does, however, state that a certain emotional empathy with the religious persons studied may be "a psychological requirement for the achievement of understanding" (59) as he defined it.

Ratschow goes much further in this respect (1973: 362-370; 390-396). For him the personal religiosity of the researcher is a *conditio sine qua non* of all religio-historical work (353 and 392 f.). Without it, he would fail to grasp the essence of the object studied. Despite Ratschow's emphatic statements as to the centrality of this requirement, a host of objections come to mind immediately. First of all, a researcher's personal religious convictions can bar him from a proper understanding of the faith of other men. In other words, it may have the opposite effect from what Ratschow believes it to have. Secondly, the religious tradition of the historian of religions may be so different from the one he is studying that the former presents an obstacle to understanding the latter rather than a precondition. Thirdly, from the two requirements of being a religious person oneself, on the one hand, and of being objective on the other, one could conclude rather curiously, that a person who was religious at some time in his life but has become agnostic would be in the best position to understand religions objectively. Nobody has made as yet such a proposition. Fourthly, it is a well known fact that non-religious scholars have made first rate contributions to the understanding of certain religions. Further, there are many aspects of man's life about which historians are writing without having first-hand experience themselves. A historian of politics, e.g., is not required to be a politician. It is true, such experience may be helpful, but it is not indispensable. Moreover, it is impossible, especially for a historian of religions who studies not only one religious tradition but does comparative research, to have an insider's view of every phenomenon he is studying. It may be

objected that this is not intended when personal religiosity is required from a student of religions; as long as he is religious he will understand other religious men. This brings us back to the fact mentioned above, that there are fundamental differences among the various religious traditions, and to understand one does not guarantee the understanding of another. Finally, it must be said with Baird that religious experience is not "an operative part of the methodology of the historian of religions" (1971: 59). Similarly, Bianchi, while admitting that the work of a historian is necessarily influenced by his personal philosophical and religious outlook, insists that the verification of hypotheses is solely a matter of applying the historical method (1964: 19). Ratschow's quoting of this same page of Bianchi's book in favor of his statement concerning the religiosity of the researcher is therefore not justified.

Smart too addresses himself to the question whether "faith [is] a kind of qualification in this field" of religious studies (1973a: 4), and whether "to know a fair amount of religion is to *have* a fair amount of it" (4), or, in other words, whether "understanding presupposes faith" (17). He tries to give an answer to it by analyzing the nature of the phenomenological enquiry into religion. His conclusion is "that there is no strong reason to hold that particular commitment is necessary to the practice of Religion", i.e. the study of religion (34). Rather, man's capabilities for imagination and empathy as well as his reasoning powers (31) enable him to understand views to which he is not committed. As opposed to Ratschow, who thinks that the deepest or last understanding is open only to the adherent of a given religious tradition, and that *Religionswissenschaft* comes to an absolute limit which it cannot cross (1973: 395 f.), Smart admits that experience "somehow gets *behind* the pictures which are Expressed about the Focus" of a religion (1973a: 32), but he also points out that this is not peculiar to the science of religion; it affects equally the theology of this religion.

The tension between observing and believing runs also through Desroche's book *Jacob and the Angel* (1973). At the end of it he tells of a conversation with Eliade which is worth quoting in this context. "I was once talking with Mircea Eliade about the subjective pre-suppositions in a science like sociology of religion. When I raised the question of the minimum of subjective religious experience required

for an objective knowledge of religion or religions, he gave me a spritely answer: 'After all, it probably is enough to have had ... dreams' " (Desroche, 1973: 155).

In conclusion, two points should be underlined. First, research into religious traditions does not demand that the researcher be a religious person himself. Second, the aim of "understanding" is not distinctive of history of religions (Baird, 1971: 59). Any humanistic discipline has the same goal in studying the aspect or aspects of man's existence that it chooses to investigate.

The Meaning of Explanation in the Science of Religion

In some quarters the term "explanation" in connection with the study of religion is still a suspect term. It conjures up fears of "explaining religion away" or of "reductionism". Furthermore, it is said that "explanation" is proper to natural sciences, whereas humanities are concerned with "understanding".

Pye makes a distinction between intermediate or partial explanations, and general, conclusive explanations (1972: 17-19). The first kind tries to show relationships "which seem to exist between religious data in particular and social or psychological factors generally" (19). The second kind is exemplified by Marxist and Freudian theories. They explain religion away by deducing it from more fundamental non-religious factors. Pye does not intend to say that such explanations are ruled out forever, but they "really belong among the 'further questions which the data themselves raise'" (18). The reason for this is that the science of religion does not make statements of truth or otherwise of the religions studied.

A more detailed discussion of the problem of explanation can be found in Smart's book *The Phenomenon of Religion* (1973a). He makes two distinctions: (a) between historical or narrative and structural explanations; (b) between external and internal explanations. Structural explanations "appeal to some structure of reality, say human psychology" (37; cf. Smart, 1973b: 35). Frequently, narrative and structural explanations combine. Internal explanations try to explain one dimension of religion through another; an example is found in the myth and ritual school (Smart, 197b: 111-134). External explanations resort to structures that lie outside the religious realm;

the emergence of agriculture, e.g., accounts at least partially for the importance of mother-goddesses in certain periods. Obviously, such explanations can run either way, i.e. from the non-religious to the religious as well as from the religious to the non-religious (Smart, 1973a: 43 f.).

The problem of whether or not religion is being explained away arises in connection with structural explanations offered mainly by psychology and sociology of religion (Smart, 1973a: 37). Religion, it is feared, may become a mere epiphenomenon of more basic structures. In a preliminary answer, Smart questions these feelings by underlining the fact that religious institutions, experiences, etc., are not only caused by, but are also causal to, other, non-religious institutions, experiences, etc. (1973a: 37). However, there is also the problem of the compatibilities of explanations (1973a: 11; cf. Smart, 1973b: 135-144), i.e., what counts as an alternative or competing explanation (1973a: 38); and, finally, there is the question of reductionist explanations.

As to the compatibility of several types of explanation, e.g. theological and psychological ones, science of religion has to look upon them as joint explanations which together account for a phenomenon (1973a: 141). It has to be kept in mind, though, that theological explanations within the framework of the science of religion must be "bracketed", i.e. their truth can neither be affirmed nor denied. This entails that such explanations are of the lowest level, in the sense that "the mere comparison of one man's experience with another and the typing of them together as two instances of the same type represents a kind of explanation" (140). Smart goes on to say that, even though this sounds trivial, it may be of some importance in so far as "it indicates that certain general patterns occur, which themselves may have powerful effects ...; and it raises the problem of their explanation" (142).

With regard to reductionist explanations, Smart understands them in the sense of reducing one type of phenomena to another, or of reducing statements about one type of phenomena to statements about another type (144), whereby the notion of reduction suggests that the second type is more basic (145). The question is, therefore, what is "more basic"? In Smart's opinion, such a question cannot be answered presently. It follows, thus, that we can neither assert that a reductionist

explanation is possible nor that it is not or will not be so in the future. Further empirical and theoretical or metaphysical research is needed.

Such a standpoint, no doubt, will be somewhat disconcerting to religious persons, although it need not be so, since the question remains open and it is unknown whether and how it will ever be solved. In his second book on methodology, *The Science of Religion and the Sociology of Knowledge* (1973b), Smart guards himself explicitly against the possible objection that a phenomenological approach to the study of religion involves "a reduction of religious entities to mere items of human belief" (49), and criticizes P. Berger's reductionism in *The Sacred Canopy* (Smart, 1973b: ch. 4). Smart's arguments will be taken up below in the section on phenomenology.

The Role of Comparison

It is almost generally assumed that the science of religion is essentially a comparative discipline (Bianchi, 1964: 9-13; 1970: 5-9; Puech-Vignaux, 1970: 11; Brelich, 1970: 47-59; Bianchi, Bleeker, Bausani, 1972; Smart, 1973a; 1973b; Meslin, 1973: 153-169; Ratschow, 1973: 348, 351, 356; etc.). Reservations with regard to comparisons in the scientific study of religions are expressed in the publication *Problèmes et méthodes d'histoire des religions* (1968) of the Section des Sciences religieuses of the Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris. On the whole, comparative history of religions is hardly taught today in France, as E. Poulat states regretfully (1970: 94); the emphasis lies clearly on the "historiens rigoureusement spécialisés" (Poulat, 1970: 94 f.).

The kind of comparison which is proper to the science of religions and constitutes at the same time the distinctive character of the discipline, is the historical comparison (Brelich, 1970: 57, and Meslin, 1973: 155). "Toute histoire des religions doit être comparative" (Meslin, 1973: 155). It is the comparative perspective which distinguishes the history of religions from other disciplines. Even if a historian of religions limits his area of research to only one religion, he has to study this religion not as a historian of the particular civilization to which it belongs, but as a historian of religions, i.e., from the perspective and with the comparative method of this discipline (Brelich, 1970: 58). It goes without saying that in doing so, the individual scholar has

to rely on the research of other historians of religions with their respective specializations (Brelich, 1970: 58).

The pluralistic character of the science of religion is also emphasized by Smart in both his books (1973a; 1973b). "... it would appear that no full study of religion can properly be undertaken without becoming immersed in more than one tradition" (Smart, 1973b: 9). The reason for this is, according to Smart, the fact that the scientific study of religion is an aspectual study, i.e., "religion is to be treated as an aspect of existence" (8 f.). Just as other aspectual studies, such as that of economics or politics, are necessarily multi-area, the study of religion has to be multi-area or multi-traditional. This fact is reinforced by the impossibility of experimentation in the human sciences. Hypotheses have, therefore, to be tested in cross-cultural situations (18). Furthermore, comparative studies help to bring assumptions to the surface (Smart, 1973a: 71).

Widengren's article "La méthode comparative: entre philologie et phénoménologie" (1972) is concerned with the nature of the phenomenological method. The latter, according to Widengren, has its basis in philology and the comparative method (14).

Several authors re-emphasize the importance of seeing each religious phenomenon or item within the web of all the other elements of which it is part (Bausani, 1972: 57 and *passim*; Smart, 1973a: 41; Meslin, 1973: 155 f.). Only a due consideration of the "function" of the single elements in a whole, as Bausani puts in (65), will prevent the researcher from making unwarranted comparisons. Meslin deduces from this that "tout comparatisme débouche sur une recherche des structures" (1973: 156). He discusses the work of Georges Dumézil as representative of this approach, "allant de la mythologie comparée à l'histoire des structures de la pensée" (156). It leads beyond the myths and legends and reveals the mental structures of man, perceived through the variety of his discourses about the world and the gods (169). It is quite obvious that from a different methodological standpoint than that of Meslin, such a program lies beyond the realm of the science of religion and belongs to "further questions which the data themselves raise" (Pye, 1972: 31-35).

Phenomenology and Typology

It is not intended here to resume the discussion of the various problems connected with the phenomenology of religion. Only in so

far as the literature under review refers to such issues of previous discussions, will they be included.

Usefulness and insufficiency of the phenomenology of religion are underlined by Brelich (1970: 40 f.). Its usefulness lies in the fact that it shows the specialists of each civilization that every religious phenomenon transcends their area of specialization and is only the particular manifestation of something much more general and vast. This in turn leads to the question why a given religion adopts such or such a variant of the same "fundamental phenomenon". This question cannot be answered by phenomenology, but needs the specialized historian. Brelich considers thus, the creation of the discipline phenomenology of religion as justified but is also well aware of its limitations (39).

The chapter on "La phénoménologie religieuse" in the *Introduction aux sciences humaines des religions* (1970) was written by F.-A. Isambert. He presents the various phenomenologies as they are practiced, discussing the works of Chantepie de la Saussaye, van der Leeuw, and this common and ill defined phenomenology which he calls "la phénoménologie de monsieur Jourdain" (231-234). Among the representatives of the latter he enumerates R. Otto, C. J. Bleeker, K. Kerényi, G. Dumézil, R. Caillois. Although there are differences between them, one cannot deny, in Isambert's opinion, a common inspiration (231). A "portrait" of this kind of phenomenology would include the following features: "*epoche*" and "the understanding of the meaning of a religion" as the proper aim of all phenomenology of religion, as well as "l'essentialisation phénoménologique" (233); this last trait is especially obvious in Otto; he proceeds from the feelings of the one who is fascinated to the attributes of the one that fascinates and finally ends up by having "substantifié le propre de ce qui fascine" (233). The critical question to be asked of phenomenology is that of intersubjectivity: how are these objectified meanings (*significations*) accessible to others? There are several solutions: introspection or observation (e.g. J. Wach); monistic or pluralistic solutions (van der Leeuw and R. Caillois); and archetypism or cultural empiricism (M. Eliade and Max Weber). Isambert concludes that the religious object by definition "*se voile, c'est-à-dire se montre caché*. Et le propre du sujet religieux est de dévoiler tout en voilant ce que le regard cherche, mais dont il ne peut soutenir la vue" (240).

In his analysis of Isambert's contribution, A. Saucerotte (1972) opposes to the theological implications of the phenomenology of religion an alternative view. Whereas the purely interior dialectic Subject-Object constitutes for the phenomenology of religion the religious experience "*elle-même d'accession à une réalité transcendental*", this dialectic is in the eyes of a scientific psychology, which does not posit the *a priori* of a suprasensible Object, the manifestation of the relation Actualised Group Consciousness—From the Past Inherited Unconscious. The intersubjective accessibility to this object demanded by Isambert, affirms once more its social character, since this intersubjectivity can only be established through language which is the social tie (*lien*) *par excellence* (30 f.).

Phenomenology "in the Eliadian style" (Baird, 1971: 153) is also subjected to criticism by Baird. Eliade's phenomenological understanding of religion can only be accepted by those who share his ontological stance (90 f.). Eliade bases his understanding on the concept of universal religious structures; a concept which is not accessible to empirical research; it is transhistorical (90, 152 f.). Thus, "the phenomenological method is a legitimate level of understanding to the extent to which one is convinced of the reality of the transhistorical structures and archetypes" (89 f.). It is, of course, not for the first time that such a critique of Eliade has been voiced; the most recent one can be found in Meslin's book (1973).

Widengren (1972) conceives of the phenomenological method as being based on philology and the comparative method, and as comprising the following four successive stages: 1. Description of facts. 2. Arrangement of the facts in a systematic order. 3. Interpretation of facts in order to understand their meaning. 4. Attempt to establish a type, a structure, a mechanism, without in any way violating the historical facts, but also without confounding phenomenology and history (14). Thus, he opposes both, a complete separation of history and phenomenology as well as a confusing of both. That Widengren's program is easier described than put into practice (Rudolph, 1973: 403) is illustrated by his own confusing historical and phenomenological methods, as he himself admits (1972: 10).

Bleeker's paper "The Contribution of the Phenomenology of Religion to the Study of the History of Religions" (1972) was read at the same symposium as Widengren's. Apart from making the historian

reflect on the presuppositions of his work, and from sharpening his eye "for the specific nature of religion and for its function in cultural and social life" (43), phenomenology of religion helps the historian to clarify the meaning of religious phenomena and to gain insight into the essence and the structure of the latter (44). The problematical nature of this last statement needs no further elaboration after all that has been said about this "phenomenological essentialism". In the symposium itself, the main issue was the relationship between history and phenomenology of religion. Despite the differences in opinion expressed by the various participants, there seems to have emerged an agreement on the necessity to integrate the two perspectives, the historical and phenomenological.

This is also the conclusion at which Meslin arrives: "*histoire et phénoménologie se complètent étroitement*" (1973: 145). They constitute two interdependent tools of the same science of religion. If phenomenology cuts itself off from history and reduces everything to a common essence, it cuts itself off, in effect, from an adequate understanding of the very phenomena it tries to comprehend. Because only through historical analysis can we understand and explain man's choice of a specific religious form as well as the reasons for this choice (152).

The dilemma with which phenomenology of religion is faced is clearly expressed by Isambert: Either the facts observed are explained directly, psychologically or sociologically, through the conditions in which they originated, "*ce qui ne donne aucune part à leur signification*", or one takes seriously the meaning that those concerned give them: "*mais n'est-ce pas alors prendre à son compte la référence au surnaturel et s'écarter du projet d'une science humaine des faits religieux?*" (218).

A way out of this dilemma is sought by Smart when he characterizes the task of phenomenology of religion not only as descriptive, but also as comprising what he calls "bracketed Expression". This latter term is to indicate the necessity for (1) an evocative description, and (2) for avoiding the impression that phenomenology of religion deals only with "human" phenomena. This means that a phenomenological description should convey adequately what the religious items described mean to an adherent (1973a: 32-34; 67). This is especially important in the light of the fact that frequently descriptions are more than what

they seem to be, i.e., "they contain explanations or at least incipient explanations" (1973a: 57), commenting on "the true state of affairs". Since this is inadmissible in the framework of a phenomenological study of religion, and since, on the other hand, a realistic account, i.e. an account that affirms the reality of the focus of a given religious tradition, equally transgresses the limits of such a study, it is "bracketed realism" (61) that is the appropriate method. In other words, the question as to truth, existence, etc., or otherwise of a religious claim "is a question not asked, not a question left undecided" (62). As to the allegedly human phenomena that constitute the object of phenomenological studies, Smart calls such a concept a simplification (68). The interplay between the focus of a religious rite, belief, etc., and the participants must be part of a phenomenological description. Should the focus exist (a question not asked in this context, as was pointed out before), it is more than human phenomena that are being studied.

There are two phases to phenomenology of religion, according to Smart. The first one he calls historical phenomenology (1973a: 40), i.e., the structural description of religions or items therein (40, 76). The second is typological phenomenology, i.e., "the elaboration of a standardised set of categories, of types of religious items" (41, 76). The necessity to study each item within the organic context of a given tradition presents a serious difficulty to typological studies. What justifies nevertheless the application of types within different cultures is the "formal" sense of these categories. "Prayer", e.g., is the form, the intention as directed to a particular focus, is the matter (77). The function of such types or categories is a heuristic one, i.e. they are suggestive of possible explanations (76 f.). It seems to me that this last point is an especially important one. To see comparisons and typologies as heuristic devices would put them into the right perspective and help avoid many of the traditional misconceptions created by comparative research.

The Multi-Methodic Nature of the Study of Religion

Several factors have to be mentioned here at the outset. First, it is generally recognized that no one method or discipline can lead to an exhaustive and all-encompassing understanding of man's religious aspect. Second, in actual fact certain approaches, at least up to recent

times, were predominant; the ensuing incompleteness of the scientific study of religion has been deplored repeatedly. Third, there are attempts at remedying this deficiency by more balanced and integral studies; this is done by drawing more than hitherto on disciplines that have already concerned themselves with religion, as well as by utilizing new methods that have played no or only a marginal role so far.

The requirement of a poly-methodic scientific study of religion has been underlined especially by Smart (1973b: 9). He admits, though, that a rounded approach involving history, phenomenology, sociology, and psychology, rarely has "been realized anywhere in the history of religions" (33). For various reasons, the science of religion has heavily concentrated on literary studies (1973a: 73) and neglected sociological, psychological, etc., investigations.

The same point is made by J. R. Hinnells in a review of two recent books on methodology, viz. Ramsey and Wilson, eds., *The Study of Religion in Colleges and Universities*, and Bianchi, Bleeker, Bausani (1972). He asks whether it is possible at all "to begin contemplating discussions of types, structures or essence until the whole is studied from the many, and equally important, different points of view? The number of teaching posts dedicated to the sociological, anthropological, psychological and artistic aspects of the subject are pathetically few" (Hinnells, 1973: 373).

Whereas the above disciplines have already made substantial contributions to our understanding of religion, other research methods have been applied to a lesser degree.

Å. Hultkrantz has initiated an approach that he calls "ecology of religion". In several papers he has set out its methodological principles and shown its application to specific cases (1954; 1965; 1966). At the conference in Turku he presented a paper on the scope and methodology of ecology of religion trying to answer at the same time objections that have been made against such a study (1973). Ecology of religion "attributes a decisive influence to environment in the organisation and development of religious forms" (1973: 3). Primarily it is to be used in the analysis "of those religions whose cultures are dependent on the natural environment, that is, the so-called primitive religions" (4). The areas to be elucidated by the ecological approach are, according to Hultkrantz, "the interaction between nature and religion . . . , ecological integration or convergence as an alternative of

historical diffusion in the explanation of similar religious forms in different places, the interpretation of prehistoric religions, and religious change" (17).

The relationship between environment and religion constitutes also the research focus of "geography of religion". Even though the beginnings of this kind of study can be traced back to the period of the Reformation (Büttner, 1974), the discipline is still in its infancy, as it were. Recently, Prof. M. Büttner of Bochum has made numerous efforts aimed at reviving it and giving it a new direction (1972; 1973; 1974). He sees as the task of the geographer of religion "to study the reciprocal relationships between religion and its environment which occur within the framework of a dialectical process"; teamwork with other disciplines that concern themselves with the study of religion is of paramount importance (1974: 26). The focus on the reciprocity of the relationships is what distinguishes geography of religion from ecology of religion (1973: 8). Prof. Büttner is presently in the process of elaborating and refining his concept of geography of religion as well as applying it to, and testing it in, concrete cases. (An anthology "Religionsgeographie", edited by M. Schwind, is announced for publication by the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft in Darmstadt).

A further discipline is added to the traditional ones by Ratschow when he includes "ethology of religion" as a "methodological orientation" for the study of religion (1973: 371, 387-389). He refers thereby to *Verhaltensforschung* which was developed from research into animal behavior; insights of this science are to be used for the interpretation of ritual processes. So far there exist only a few attempts at utilizing such methods; Ratschow cites, in fact, only one, i.e., P. Weidkuhn, *Aggressivität, Ritus, Säkularisierung. Grundformen religiöser Prozesse* (Basel, 1965). Despite the discouraging results that emerged from them, Ratschow thinks that, with the necessary precautions, this method is in principle sound (389).

Only one of the recent books on methodology of the science of religion includes a discussion of Lévi-Strauss' structuralism, viz. Meslin (1973). Others contain at the most passing remarks on it. Meslin thinks it is not only legitimate, but absolutely necessary to examine what structuralist analysis can contribute to the apprehension and comprehension of the expression of the sacred (1973: 170). He gives, thus, a short account of structuralist methods and theories, and

his critique of them. It is not necessary here to repeat the former; only the latter will be taken up. Meslin is not prepared to accept the "affirmation, fundamental to the structuralist theory, that the myths refer only to customs and these to techniques" (189); the meaning of myth is, on the contrary, found in the primary and immediate meaning of its content (177 f.). Meslin also takes issue, as many others have done, with the structuralist principle that all the variants of a myth are of equal value. The underlying *a priori* is the conviction that the mythical structure is identical with that of the human mind which, in the eyes of Lévi-Strauss, is constant. This leads not only to an annihilation of all bizarre and contradictory elements within the myths, but also to the refusal to see certain variants as the expression of a historical evolution (178 f.).

There is, further, the danger that structural analysis reduces the value of mythical thought, i.e., myth is an extremely complex cultural reality that cannot be analysed through one hermeneutics only. As the Mesopotamian example shows, not all myths aim at mediating between nature and culture; it may be true for some cultural areas, but it cannot be shown to be so for others (179 f.).

However, "the essential question posed by the structuralist analysis of myths is whether all 'savage thinking' is compatible with an apprehension and a certain expression of the sacred. . . . The answer of Cl. Lévi-Strauss is calmly and totally negative" (180). Lévi-Strauss' philosophy is impermeable to all ideas of a revelation of the sacred and divine transcendence. His thought, concludes Meslin, represents certainly one of the most seductive forms of modern agnosticism (182).

Due to its refusal to interiorize any comprehension of the sacred, the structuralist method is located at the antipodes of phenomenology of religion. Even though the structuralist too aims at understanding, it is not the same as the *Verstehen* of the phenomenologist. For structuralism, understanding does not imply any participation on the part of the observer. Rather, it tries to explain by uncovering structural laws and mechanisms of the human mind, but not the contents of man's thinking; just as a linguist tries to work out the grammar of a given language without concerning himself in the least with a knowledge of the man who speaks the language or with what he expresses through it (190).

Meslin's discussion of structuralism is the first attempt at assessing its import for the science of religion as a whole. So far, only the analysis of myths by means of structural methods has been undertaken. I know of only one instance where a structural analysis of a ritual, viz. the Hindu ceremony of *upanayana*, has been made. It was presented orally by Prof. H. Penner at the conference "Methodology and World Religions". Only the future will show to what extent structuralism can be utilized by the science of religion. Undoubtedly, much will depend on how one conceives of such a science. If it is to remain an empirical-historical discipline, there will be a considerable area of structuralist theory that will again fall under "further questions to be asked of the data". Van Baal, after an analysis of Lévi-Strauss' work within the framework of an anthropological study of religion, considers the answer to the question what structuralism has contributed to the study of religion an ambiguous one. On the one hand, it neglected the problem since it studies religious phenomena only "as cases of the formal categories created by the structures of the human mind", on the other hand, it did contribute to our understanding "by pointing out that a man's universe is a signifying universe, signifying to its signifier"; in the final analysis, "We are thrown back on the problem of man" (van Baal, 1971: 213).

Concluding Remarks

A study of recent literature on the methodology of the science of religion brings to light several points. (1) Much of the discussion turns around issues that have been under consideration for a long time now. Given the nature of the development of the discipline as well as the present concern with method in all or most sciences, this is no occasion for surprise. Rather, it can be viewed under the perspective of the ongoing process of rethinking fundamental concepts in the attempt to clarify and refine them in accordance with the changed views in other areas. Nobody who reads these works will deny the necessity for such rethinking, nor the fact that some progress is being made towards a clearer understanding of the goals and the conceptual scheme of the science of religion. (2) There is also evident the continuous trend towards a more balanced study of religion that will not be as predominantly a study of texts as it traditionally has been. The

inclusion of sociological, psychological, psychoanalytic, structural, etc., analyses in reflections on a theory of the science of religion should eventually lead to a more rounded approach, even though the possibilities and problems of interdisciplinary research still await exploration. Presently, the various disciplines work largely in ignorance of each other. (3) Methods more recently applied to the religious aspect, such as geography, ecology, etc., provide further insights into religious behaviour and religious thinking. (4) The literature under review shows the spreading of the awareness of the necessity for a comprehensive philosophy of the science of religion. This in itself is an encouraging fact since, as Brelich says, the future of the history of religions "depends on the acquisition and the diffusion of the special methodological *conscience* that is required by this discipline" (1970: 58). It is true, the pursuit of methodology as an end in itself would be sterile, but it is equally as true that the neglect of questions of this kind would, in the long run, result in the dissolution of any scientific study of religion. (5) Finally, in answer to those who question the value of a continuous examination of methods, it should be emphasized that the scholars examining the viability of current methods by focussing in on the research process itself are instrumental in (a) discovering underlying methodological presuppositions which have gone unnoticed previously and thus have colored the results, (b) delineating the limitations of a given method with a particular type of data, (c) adapting traditional methods or methods from other disciplines which yield improved results, and (d) developing totally new approaches.

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FREEDOM FROM DEATH IN THE WORSHIP OF KĀLĪ

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I. "*Extremes*"

Kālī is terrible-faced and of fearful aspect. She is awful. Her hair is disheveled, she wears a garland of skulls, and has four hands. Her lower left hand holds a freshly cut human head, and in her upper left hand there is a scimitar. Her upper right hand makes the symbol of fearlessness-assurance, and her lower right hand makes the gesture of conferring boons. She is dark as the darkest cloud. She is naked. From her neck hangs a garland of severed human heads from which flows blood. Two severed heads dangle from her ears as ornaments. She has terrible, fanglike teeth and is dreadful-faced. She has large, prominent breasts. Her waistband is made of severed human hands. She has a smiling face. Blood flows from the corners of her mouth which makes her lips glisten. She makes loud, horrible sounds. She is awe-inspiring. She dwells in the cremation ground. She has three eyes as red and bright as the sun. Her teeth are formidable. Her right side is covered by her flowing, disheveled hair. She stands on Mahādeva, who lies like a corpse beneath her. She is surrounded by jackals who make terrific noises.¹⁾

It is sometimes said that Indian culture generally betrays a love for extremes, that moderation and balance tend to get lost in the Indian tendency to exploit everything to its ultimate limit. Heinrich Zimmer, for example, says that a typical feature of Indian art is "that amazing tendency to go to the very limits of delight and terror, and even to press ... beyond them, to the presentation both of the wonders of the world's sensual charm and of the hair-raising, horrifying aspects of destructive forces."²⁾

Whether or not the goddess Kālī is illustrative of such a general trait in the Indian character, she does appear to represent a presence

1) The *dhyāna mantra* of the goddess Kālī from Kṛṣṇānanda Āgamavāgīśa's *Tantrasāra*, quoted in "Kālī," in Nāgendranāth Basu (ed.), *Viśvakoṣa* (Calcutta: Nāgendranāth Basu, 1893), Vol. IV, p. 35.

2) Heinrich Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Pantheon Books, 1955), Vol. I, p. 135.

that dramatically and unambiguously confronts one with "the hair-raising, horrifying aspects" of reality. She represents, it would seem, something that has been pushed to its ultimate limits, something that has been apprehended as unspeakably terrifying, something totally and irreconcilably "other." She seems "extreme."

Kālī's association with blood-sacrifice (sometimes human), her position as patron goddess of the infamous Thugs, and her importance in Vāmācāra Tantric ritual have generally won for her a reputation as a creature born of a crazed, aboriginal mind. She seems, in the words of an awe-struck writer contemplating her at the beginning of this century, "to have somehow blundered into the daylight of the twentieth century, ... unmodified by time and unsoftened by culture."³) Even when compared with Śiva's *ghora* (terrible) forms Kālī stands out as a creature who is wild, frantic, out of control. And if it were not for her extraordinary popularity in the Hindu tradition we might be able to say, as impartial students of religious man, that she *is* an "extreme case," an aberration, a dark, frightening creature conjured up by a few who existed on the fringes of Indian society, that she is interesting and remarkable, but irrelevant to the mainstream of Indian religious thought.

This paper assumes, however, that Kālī, as one of the most popular Hindu divinities (in Bengal, at least) says something fundamental about the Hindu vision of things. It assumes that in Kālī are summed up truths of the tradition. By briefly considering her history, mythology, and iconography this paper seeks to discern what those truths might be.

II. *The Prehistory of Kālī*

Kālī has not always been known to the "Great" traditions of India. Her appearance as a goddess having a cycle of myths and a consistent description does not occur until the advent of purāṇic literature (ca. 200-300 A.D.). This is not to say that Kālī did not exist prior to the time of the purāṇas. There is good evidence that she did.

The name Kālī appears in earlier literature. In *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* I. 2. 4 it is one of the names of the seven tongues of Agni. As Kālī

3) J. C. Oman, *The Brahmanas, Theists and Muslims of India* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), p. 22.

is later associated with destruction and the cremation ground, it might be supposed that this early text forms the basis for the later, fully developed goddess. However, it is dangerous to read too much into this reference, which in context is simply a description of the sacrificial fire. There is no clear indication that the first six names of Agni's tongues are to be taken as representing actual beings.

Among possible prototypes of Kālī in early literature are Rātridevī (the goddess Night) and the demoness Nirṛti. As Kālī is later associated with the night and is sometimes referred to as the "terrible night of destruction," a continuity between Rātridevī and Kālī might be postulated. Rātri's general description, however, does not convey the image of a terrible being like Kālī (e.g., Ṛg-veda X. 127). She is closely identified with darkness, to be sure, but she is supplicated as the sister of the Dawn, Uṣas, and the impression one gets from Ṛg-veda X. 127 is that she is a benign figure. Any continuity she might have with the later Kālī seems tenuous.

The demoness Nirṛti is frequently mentioned in vedic literature. She is a dread being who is feared and avoided. She seems to be the personification of death, destruction, and sorrow, and whenever she is addressed the intent of the mantra is to ward her off (e.g., Ṛg-veda X. 59. 1-4; VII. 37.7; Atharva=veda II. 10. 4-8; IV. 36. 10; VI. 29.2). Her connection with Kālī is doubtful, however, insofar as she is described in Atharva-veda V. 7. 9 as she who is "golden-locked," as opposed to Kālī, who is always described as having black hair.

There are three important passages in the *Mahābhārata* that mention Kālī: Saptika Parva VIII, Virata Parva VI, and Bhīṣma Parva XXIII. In Saptika Parva VIII, Kālī appears after the sleeping Pāṇḍava army has been slaughtered by the Kaurava warriors Aśvatthāmā, Kṛpa, and Kṛtavarma (the only survivors from the Kaurava side after the great battle of Kurukṣetra). As in later descriptions she is black, her mouth is bloody, her hair is disheveled, and she holds a noose with which she leads the dead away (Saptika Parva VIII. 64 ff.). Her appearance is appropriate to the scene described, and the passage may well be the earliest passage mentioning Kālī that we have.

The other two passages are more likely to be interpolations, or at least among the very latest additions to the epic, and thus roughly contemporary with the early purāṇas (200-400 A.D.). Both passages

are hymns in praise of Durgā, who is said to have slain Mahisāsura. In both passages she is said to be a virgin, but in Bhīṣma Parva she is also called the wife of Kāpala (Śiva, the skull-bearer) and the mother of Skanda and is thus associated with Śiva. In Bhīṣma Parva Durgā is called the younger sister of Kṛṣṇa the cowherd, a reference to Kṛṣṇa's stepsister, whom Kamsa tried to murder. In both hymns Kālī is mentioned as one of Durgā's epithets. Kālī's mythological deeds are not referred to, however, nor is she described in recognizable terms. In summary, these passages suggest several later characteristics of Durgā and Kālī. Kālī's mythological deeds, though, are not mentioned, and there is good evidence to suggest that the passages are quite late, if not interpolations.⁴⁾ We must turn to the *Devī-māhātmya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa* for further early and reliable information about Kālī.

III. *Kālī in the Devī-māhātmya*

In the *Devī-māhātmya*⁵⁾ a full account of the goddess Kālī is given. Her birth, appearance, and central mythological deeds are told in detail. It is in this text that Kālī, as she came to be known in the tradition, makes her debut, her "official" entrance into the "Great Tradition" of Hinduism. The *Devī-māhātmya* is divided into three major episodes. In the first two episodes the Devī, the Great Goddess, or Durgā, as she is called frequently here, defeats the demons Kaiṭabha and Madhu (both born from Viṣṇu during his cosmic sleep) and the great demon Mahisāsura. It is during the third episode, in which the Goddess confronts the demon brothers Śumbha and Niśumbha and their army, that Kālī appears. Śumbha and Niśumbha have subdued the gods and now rule over them. The gods have collectively

4) For the date of these passages see B. C. Mazumdar, "Durgā: Her Origin and History," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain*, XXXVIII (1906-7), 355-58. Saptika Parva VIII is in the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*, while the hymns in Virata Parva VI and Bhīṣma Parva XXIII are not.

5) The *Devī-māhātmya* is a separate and complete composition despite the fact that it is found inserted in the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa* (81-93). It is treated as a separate scripture by worshipers of the Goddess and is printed as a separate text throughout India. The text is popularly known as the *Caṇḍī* (one of the names of the Goddess) and the *Saptasatī*, "the seven hundred" (a reference to the number of verses in the *Devī-māhātmya*, which actually has somewhat fewer verses than this).

petitioned the Goddess (who previously had promised to assist them whenever they found themselves in difficulty), and she has appeared in the guise of Pārvatī, from whom she emerges and presents herself in all her magnificence (85. 37-40). She calms the worried throng of gods and goes forth to battle the demon hosts. The first demon heroes sent forth to battle her are Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa. When they approach Durgā with drawn swords and bent bows, she becomes furious, her face becoming dark as ink. Suddenly there springs forth from her brow the terrible goddess Kālī, armed with a sword and noose. She wears a garland of human heads, a tiger's skin, and waves a staff with a skull handle. She is gaunt, with sunken, reddish eyes, gaping mouth, lolling tongue, and emaciated flesh. She fills the four quarters with her terrifying roar and leaps eagerly into the fray. She flings demons into her mouth and crushes them in her jaws. She wades through the demon hosts decapitating and crushing all who stand before her. Laughing and howling loudly, she approaches Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, grasps them by the hair, and in one furious instant decapitates them both with her mighty sword. Returning to Durgā with the two heads, she laughs jokingly and presents them to the Goddess as a gift.⁶⁾

A second incident in this cosmic battle features Kālī. The demon army has been nearly defeated. But there remains the fearful demon Raktabīja. This demon is nearly invincible, for every time he is wounded and begins to bleed, other demons in his image and with his might and ability to reproduce are instantly born from his blood. Durgā repeatedly strikes him with arrows and cuts him with her sword but soon realizes the situation is thereby becoming worse. She calls upon Kālī to defeat the monster. Kālī swoops onto the field

6) *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāna* has been translated into English by F. Eden Pargiter, *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna* (Bibliotheca Indica: A Collection of Oriental Works; Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press for the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1904; reprinted, Delhi: Indological Book House, 1969). The *Devī-māhātmya* section has been translated separately by Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *Devī-māhātmyam: The Glorification of the Great Goddess* (Varanasi: All-India Kashiraj Trust, 1963). The numbering of the chapters and verses in Agrawala's text does not correspond to the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāna*, since he is treating the *Devī-māhātmya* as a separate scripture. In his text, therefore, chapter I corresponds to chapter 81 in the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāna*, and so on through chapter XIII, which corresponds to chapter 93. Throughout this paper I use the chapter numbers of the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāna*.

of battle and opens her gigantic mouth. She swallows the blood-born creatures and drinks up the blood from Raktabīja's wounds. Finally, she sucks the blood from the demon, who falls to the ground dead.⁷⁾

So Kālī makes her official appearance on the Hindu scene.⁸⁾ She is born from wrath, is horrible in appearance, and is ferocious in battle. Taking delight in destruction and death, she epitomizes the wild, fearful aspects of the divine. Her role in this scripture is clearly defined: she is subservient to the goddess Durgā and is called upon to help or rescue the Great Goddess in particularly difficult circumstances. Kālī proceeds from the Goddess and is finally withdrawn into the Goddess (90. 4).

The goddess Kālī who is worshipped in India (primarily Bengal) today is obviously the same goddess who is born in the *Devī-māhātmya*. In appearance she is little changed. As a total symbol of the divine, however, she has gained independence from Durgā, she is the object of fervent devotion, her character has become richer and more complex, indeed she has come to represent for millions the highest manifestation of the divine in India. How Kālī succeeded in achieving this status, how she grew from a helper of Durgā, an embodiment of her wrath who plays a subservient role, a mistress of the universes, the Mother of all, is extremely difficult to determine, and it would be preposterous to suggest that we could understand this transfor-

7) 88. 52-59. Cf. the Thuggee version of this myth: Francis Tüker, *The Yellow Scarf* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1961), p. 62.

8) As has been said, Kālī was probably known to the "Great Tradition" prior to her appearance in the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāna* (as the reference to her in the Saptika Parva of the *Mahābhārata* may well indicate). It is also most probable that she was worshiped by several tribes or "little cultures" long before her "debut" in the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāna*, and indeed, that she was originally a tribal goddess of some kind. In the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāna*, though, there is a conscious attempt to link her with the so-called Great Goddess and to identify her with a goddess named Cāmuṇḍa (87. 25). In this sense we can speak of her debut, or her "birth" vis-à-vis the Great Tradition of Hinduism. Just what her pre-purāṇic history was is difficult, if not impossible, to determine. See Śaśibhūsaṇ Dāsgupta, *Bharatre Śakti-sādhana o Śākta Sāhitya* (Bengali) (Calcutta: Sāhitya Saṅgśad, 1367 B.S. [1961]), pp. 63-89, for some theories about Kālī's prehistory and the various strands that have merged in this scripture. See also N. N. Bhattacharyya, "Indian Mother Goddess," *Indian Studies: Past and Present*, XI, No. 4 (July-September, 1970), 380-82, for a discussion of Kālī and other "blood-thirsty" goddesses in the Indian tradition. Both of these scholars suggest that Kālī was originally an indigenous goddess worshiped with blood-sacrifice by "wild" tribes such as the Śābaras.

mation, this flowering, from the meager data we have at our disposal. Nevertheless, it seems clear that at least three major factors combined to bring about this change: (1) a growing Kālī mythology that soon associated her with the god Śiva, (2) her popularity in Tantrism, particularly the Hindu Vāmācāra Tantric tradition, and (3) the fervent devotion of a few Bengali poet-saints. These three factors, I think were largely responsible for "completing" the image of Kālī as contained in the *Devī-māhātmya* in such a way that she could become what she is today for millions of her devotees.

IV. *The Early History of Kālī in Purāṇic and Dramatic Literature*

Kālī's development into a major Hindu deity does not seem to have taken place immediately. Indeed, it seems clear that her acceptance was often reluctant and grudging. In much of the literature immediately following the *Devī-māhātmya* or roughly contemporary with it, Kālī continues to be either a servant of Durgā, a particularly ferocious and minor manifestation of the Devī, or a purely negative, dark, and terrible fiend worshiped only by wild tribes or thieves.

In the *Agni-* and *Garuḍa-purāṇas* she is summoned in mantras invoked for success in war and against enemies generally. Her appearance is terrible, and her mantras are generally spine-chilling. She is gaunt, fanged, laughs diabolically, dances frantically, wears a garland of corpses, sits on the back of a giant ghost, lives in the cremation ground, and is asked to crush, trample, break, and burn the enemy.⁹⁾

In the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* she is the patron goddess of a band of thieves (an association she was to keep, as her identification with the Thugs demonstrates). The leader of the thieves seeks to gain her blessing so that he might be granted a son and captures a childlike, innocent brahmin to sacrifice to her. The effulgence of the saintly brahmin, however, scorches Kālī, who leaps from her image and slaughters the band of thieves. She is described in the usual way: she has a dreadful face, large teeth, and laughs wildly. She and her following of demons decapitate all the thieves, become inebriated from drinking their blood, and begin to throw their heads around in sport.¹⁰⁾

There are several references to terrible, blood-thirsty goddesses in

9) *Agni-purāṇa* 133, 134, and 136; *Garuḍa-purāṇa* 38.

10) *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* 5. 9. 12-20.

the dramatic literature of about this time. Kālī herself is mentioned in Kalidāsa's *Kumārasambhava* (7. 39), and it is clear (despite the poet's name) that during his time (fourth to fifth centuries A.D.) she was still a quite minor deity. She is mentioned along with many other gods as part of Śiva's wedding procession. She brings up the rear, following a group of goddesses called the *matṛkas* ("mothers"), and is said to wear a necklace of skulls.

In Subandhu's *Vāsavadattā* (sixth or seventh century A.D.) a goddess named Bhagavatī or Kātyayanī is mentioned, and her description is much like Kālī's. She is said to have slain Śumbha and Niśumbha,¹¹⁾ to live on the banks of the Ganges, and to live surrounded by ghosts in the cremation ground. In Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Kādambarī* (seventh century A.D.) the worship of Caṇḍī (a popular name of the goddess Durgā, but also applied sometimes to Kālī) by Śabaras, a tribe of primitive hunters, is described. The worship takes place in the depths of the forest, and blood flows freely.¹²⁾ In Vākpati's *Gauḍavaho* (a Prakrit work of the late seventh or early eighth century A.D.) Kālī is described as a non-Aryan goddess, as an aspect of the goddess Vindhyaśinī (she who dwells in the Vindhya Mountains). She is worshiped by Śabaras and is clothed in leaves.¹³⁾

In Bhavabhūti's *Mālatīmādhava* (late seventh or early eighth century A.D.) the heroine, Mālatī, is captured by a female devotee of Cāmuṇḍā, Kapālakundalā, who intends to sacrifice her to the goddess. Cāmuṇḍā's temple is near a cremation ground. In a hymn of praise to the terrible goddess she is described as dancing wildly and making the worlds shake. She is said to have a gaping mouth and a garland of skulls that laugh and terrify the worlds, to be covered with snakes, to shower flames from her eyes that destroy the worlds, and to be surrounded by fiends and goblins.¹⁴⁾ As in those references mentioned above, Kālī, or Cāmuṇḍā as she is called here, is primarily a terrifying, demonic creature worshiped by those on the periphery of society.¹⁵⁾ She is

11) In at least one purāṇic account it is Kālī, not Durgā, who slays Śumbha and Niśumbha: *Devī-bhāgavata* V. 30.

12) Dāsgupta, *Bharater Śakti-sādhana o Śakta Sāhitya*, pp. 66-67.

13) Mazumdar, "Durgā," p. 357.

14) *Bhavabhūti's Mālatīmādhava with the Commentary of Jagaddhara*, ed. and trans. M. R. Kale (3rd ed.; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967), pp. 44-48.

15) It is significant to note that in the *Mānasāra-śilpasastra* (sixth to eighth centuries A.D.) it is said that Kālī's temples should be built far from villages

not identified with the mainstream of Hindu religion, nor does she appear as a great goddess in her own right. In this drama, however, there is an early indication of things to come, an indication of Kālī's future growing importance in the tradition. For in this drama, despite her terrifying and primarily "negative" role, she is said to have an important partner in her mad dances: the great dancing god, Śiva himself.¹⁶⁾

V. Kālī's Association with Śiva

Thus far a few things seem clear about Kālī's early history. Although the author of the *Devī-māhātmya* tried to incorporate Kālī into the ranks of Hindu deity by associating her with Durgā, or the Great Goddess generally, she was not accepted immediately or unanimously by the tradition. For some time (it is not clear how long or by how many) she was seen as primarily a demonic shrew, worshiped by thieves or by cults outside, or on the periphery, of Hindu society.

At some point, however, Kālī (and Durgā as well) began to be associated with Śiva.¹⁷⁾ Why this came about is largely a matter of conjecture. Perhaps the tradition recognized in Kālī and certain of the wilder manifestations of Śiva kindred spirits and so gradually came to associate the two. Whatever the prime motive was in this association, it seems to have taken place fairly early and in a variety of ways.

and towns, near the cremation grounds, and near the dwellings of the Chanḍālas (9. 289).

16) Bhavabhūti's *Mālatīmādhava*, p. 47.

17) In the *Devī-māhātmya* it is quite clear that Durgā is an independent deity, great in her own right, and only loosely affiliated with any of the great male deities. And if any one of the great gods can be said to be her closest associate, it is Viṣṇu rather than Śiva. It is from Viṣṇu that she is born in the first episode of the *Devī-māhātmya* (81. 68-69). She is nowhere in this episode associated with Śiva. The same is true of subsequent episodes. When Śiva does appear in the second episode, he is simply one among many male gods who contribute their powers to the creation of Durgā (82. 12-13). In the third episode, in which Kālī is born, the Goddess appears in the form of Pārvatī, emerges from the body of Pārvatī, and proceeds to battle. Now while it is clear that Pārvatī has been associated with Śiva since at least the time of the *Mahābhārata*, in this myth she appears to be independent of him. Indeed, when Śiva does make his appearance, he is treated as a mere messenger of the Goddess and plays a very minor role in the combat (88. 22-26). It is important to note, too, that Pārvatī appears only after the gods have gone to the Himalayas and petitioned in unison to the "Goddess who is named Viṣṇu-māyā" (85. 6).

The *Vāmana-purāṇa* associates the two by making "Kālī" (the dark one) one of Pārvatī's epithets. In the long account of Śiva and Pārvatī's wedding (*Vāmana* 25-27) the names Pārvatī and Kālī are used interchangeably. The goddess's appearance, though, has nothing to do with the terrible creature born of Durgā's fury in the *Devī-māhātmya*. The only common feature is her dark complexion, and it is precisely this dark complexion that is subsequently gotten rid of by Pārvatī. (She is embarrassed by it and determines to rid herself of it when Śiva jokingly calls her Kālī, a reference to, or slur upon, her dark complexion.) The dark complexion itself, Pārvatī's outward sheath (*koṣa*), then takes on an identity of its own in the goddess Kauśikī (she of the sheath), which is one of the most popular names of the Goddess in this version of the myth of the slaying of Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa. Kālī as she is known to the *Devī-māhātmya*, the terrible, blood-thirsty ogress, is subsequently born from Kauśikī and defeats Caṇḍa, Muṇḍa, and Raktabīja as in the *Devī-māhātmya*.

The central mythological deeds of Kālī have been changed very little in the *Vāmana-purāṇa*. Kālī is still born from Durgā's wrath upon the approach of Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa and is described as having a frightful face, a skull-topped staff, a mighty sword, a garland of skulls, and emaciated flesh covered with blood (29. 56-57). She slays Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa at Durgā's command and later is called upon to rescue Durgā when Raktabīja appears to be winning the battle (30). However, the prelude to the great battle against Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, Pārvatī's marriage to Śiva, clearly shows that Kālī in name, if not in form, has been associated with Śiva's consort. Pārvatī is repeatedly called Kālī, and it is from Pārvatī-Kālī's black skin that Durgā is born, who in turn gives birth to the Kālī of terrible appearance. To some extent, of course, the version of the Goddess's victory over Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa in the *Vāmana-purāṇa* may be understood as an artificial attempt on the part of the author to relate various strands of the Goddess in an attempt to show that they are all aspects of the one Mahādevī. Be that as it may, in subsequent Hindu history Kālī does in fact become associated with Śiva as his consort-*śakti*, so that whenever she is shown with a male god, it is inevitably Śiva.

Kālī is associated with Śiva in the same way and in the same story in the *Śiva-purāṇa* (*Vāyavīyasamhitā* I. 24-25). Elsewhere in this purāṇa (which is probably quite late), though, Kālī's association with

Śiva is more definitely established. In several places she is part of his retinue of warriors (Rudrasaṃhitā II. 23. 11-12; V. 33. 36-44). When the myths of the *Devī-māhātmya* are retold in condensed form (Umāsaṃhitā 45-49) it is made clear in the text that all goddesses are manifestations of Umā-Satī-Pārvatī, Śiva's spouse. Kālī herself is barely mentioned in this retelling of Durgā's conquest of various demons (although her name appears occasionally as one of Durgā's epithets), but appears elsewhere as Śiva's helper, and in one place is specifically said to have been created from Śiva's hair (Rudrasaṃhitā II. 32. 25). It seems clear, that is, that in this text Kālī has become definitely affiliated with Śiva (as his own creation) or with his spouse, as one of her many manifestations.

In the *Liṅga-purāṇa* (II. 100) Kālī's association with Pārvatī (and by implication with Śiva) is firmly and dramatically affirmed by the following myth. Once upon a time the demoness Dārukā obtained such power through asceticism that she usurped the gods and began to rule the world. None of the gods wished to fight her as she was a woman, and so they all went to Śiva to ask what they should do. He in turn asked Pārvatī if she could save the day for the gods. Hearing her husband's request Pārvatī created from herself Kālī, with matted hair, three eyes, black in color, of terrible appearance, and holding a trident and skull. Seeing the terrible goddess the gods flee in panic, but Kālī, at Pārvatī's command, sets out with a band of ghosts and other strange creatures and defeats Dārukā, thus saving the world for the gods. After the battle, in a curious scene, Śiva appears as an infant in the battlefield amidst the corpses of the slain. Seeing him crying there Kālī picks up and nurses him. When this does not calm him she begins to dance among the dead with her entourage of ghosts until he becomes delighted and calm.¹⁸) In this text, then, Kālī is clearly associated with Pārvatī, and even plays a positive, motherly role vis-à-vis Śiva.

Kālī and Śiva dance together elsewhere, in different and various contexts. As has been mentioned they dance together in Kapālakuṇḍalā's hymn in Bhavabhūti's *Mālatīmādhava*. The scene she pictures is wild, tumultuous, and world-shaking. The two appear as mad partners in a

¹⁸) The story is summarized in Vans Kennedy, *Researches into the Nature and Affinity of Ancient and Hindu Mythology* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, & Green, 1831), pp. 337-38.

cosmic dance that is destined to destroy the worlds. Pārvatī stands by and watches, terrified, and must be comforted by Śiva.

In South India there is a tradition of a dance contest between the two. In every case Śiva is victorious. The context of the tournament differs. In one case the tournament is arranged to settle a debate about the superiority of the sexes. Pārvatī takes the form of Kālī but is still not able to defeat Śiva when he does his Ūrdhva Tāṇḍava, a particularly strenuous step.¹⁹⁾ In another account of the tournament, Kālī has just slain the demons Śumbha and Niśumbha and becomes intoxicated by drinking their blood. She begins to create havoc, threatening the world itself. Śiva is summoned to save the situation. He assumes his terrible form as Bhairava and appears before the mad goddess. She threatens to kill him but finally agrees to a dance tournament, in which she is eventually defeated and pacified.²⁰⁾ The same story is told by Śivaprakāsar in the *Tirukkūvaṇṇam*,²¹⁾ but here the scene takes place after Kālī has defeated Dārūkā (as in *Liṅga-purāṇa* II. 100, above). Finally, there is a story concerning the origin of the Chidambaram temple, a famous South Indian Śaivite holy place. In this temple legend it is said that the site originally belonged to, or was guarded by, Kālī. When some Śaivite devotees sought to have a vision of Śiva there, she drove them away, whereupon Śiva appeared, challenged her to a dance tournament, and defeated her.²²⁾

There are some obvious conclusions that can be drawn from these South Indian stories of Śiva's defeat of Kālī in a dance contest. The stories probably reflect the Śaivite confrontation with and accommodation of Kālī, and perhaps an indigenous goddess cult. As Kālī is still worshiped as a village deity in South India²³⁾ and has there the characteristics of a "deity of the place,"²⁴⁾ it is likely that she, or a

19) *Tiruppuṭṭūrb-purāṇam*, Dārūka vana-c, 115th carukkam; cited in M. A. Dorai Rangaswamy, *The Religion and Philosophy of Tevaram* (Madras: University of Madras, 1958), p. 442.

20) *Tiruvālaṅkāṭṭu-purāṇam*; cited in *ibid.*, p. 444.

21) Cited in *ibid.*, p. 445.

22) R. K. Das, *Temples of Tamilnad* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1964), p. 195.

23) Henry Whitehead, *The Village Gods of South India* (Calcutta: Association Press, 1921).

24) See Kees W. Bolle, "Speaking of a Place," in Joseph M. Kitagawa and Charles H. Long (eds.), *Myths and Symbols: Studies in Honor of Mircea Eliade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 127-40.

goddess (or goddesses) like her, was indigenous to the South. The contest, then, may mark the Śaivite accommodation of a "little tradition" as well as the accommodation of a growing, all-India Kālī mythology and cult. In these stories, moreover, it is clear that Kālī is subdued by Śiva. She is not accepted on equal terms. All of the stories smack of the Śaivite point of view. The best that Kālī can hope for is marriage with Śiva, never conquest or domination of him.²⁵⁾

There are some other, more specifically religious, implications to be drawn from the story of the dance tournament. Maṇikka Vāchakar, for example, says that had not Śiva defeated or calmed Kālī, the whole universe would have become subject to her blind, bubbling fury and destroyed itself. Her fury is equated with *prakṛti* — the realm of vibrating matter that proceeds according to its own laws. Śiva by subduing Kālī represents Puruṣa, or the yogin's heroic taming of matter — his defeat of Kālī is "a sublimation and deification of matter."²⁶⁾

There are other stories, usually in later literature, that depict the confrontation and association of Kālī and Śiva in such a way as to give Kālī the dominant position in their relationship. A striking instance of this is to be found (not surprisingly) in the *Devī-bhāgavata*. Once upon a time, the story goes, all of heaven's inhabitants were invited to Dakṣa's sacrifice with the exception of Śiva. Dakṣa thought Śiva was a bit mad and really unfit to be his daughter's (Sati's) husband, so he did not invite him. Sati, nevertheless, did not want to miss this important social event, and so asked Śiva if she might attend even though he had not been invited. Śiva refused permission, and in anger Sati assumed the terrible form of Kālī. Śiva, terrified of this awful creature, tried to flee, whereupon Kālī filled the ten directions with her various (and mostly terrible) forms.²⁷⁾ Śiva, unable to escape, sat down and in great fear looked at Kālī and asked who she was and where his lovely Sati had gone. She replied that, of course, she *was* his beloved Sati, only this form (Kālī's) was her real form,

25) Rangaswamy, *The Religion of Tevaram*, p. 490.

26) *Ibid.*, p. 491.

27) This myth is very common in later literature and tells of the origin of the *daśamahāvidyās*, the ten great forms or manifestations of the Devī. While Kālī is said to be the source of all the forms in this particular myth, she is usually said to be the first of the ten forms. See D. C. Sircar, *The Śākta Pīthas* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, n.d.), p. 48n.

the form she assumed for the tasks of creation and destruction. It was her form as universal deity. She explained to Śiva that she had assumed the beautiful form of Satī simply to reward Śiva for his austerities.²⁸)

Another story that pictures Kālī dominating Śiva is found in the *Adhyātama Rāmāyana*. When Rāma returns from Laṅkā he brags to Sītā about his conquest of the terrible ten-headed Rāvaṇa. Sītā, however, is not impressed and simply smiles. When Rāma's boasting continues, Sītā asks him what he would do if he were to confront a thousand-headed Rāvaṇa. Rāma replies that, of course, he would slay such a Rāvaṇa. Sītā looks doubtful and says that in fact such a demon does exist but that he had better let *her* take care of him. Rāma, indignant, sets out with his army to find the new terror. Finding the thousand-headed Rāvaṇa, Rāma and his army attack. However, when the giant sees the approaching army he shoots just three arrows, which drive all of Rāma's allies back to their homes. Alone on the battlefield with the giant Rāvaṇa, Rāma is disheartened and begins to weep. Sītā, seeing the predicament of her husband, smiles and immediately assumes the form of Kālī. She attacks and kills the demon and then begins tossing his heads and limbs about. She gulps his blood in her frenzy and begins to do an earth-shattering dance. The gods become alarmed and petition Śiva to intervene. He comes to the battlefield where Kālī dances in madness and throws himself down among the corpses of the slain under her dancing feet. Brahmā then calls to her, directing her attention to Śiva beneath her. Recognizing him there (he is called her husband here) she is astonished and embarrassed and stops her dance. (This is a very common representation of Kālī in Bengal.) She resumes her appearance as Sītā and accompanies the humiliated Rāma to their home.²⁹)

Now this myth (worthy of Woman's Liberation) presents us with a very different picture of Kālī's association with Śiva. Here she

28) Summarized in *Principles of Tantra: The Tantratattva of Sriyukta Śiva Candra Vidyārṇava Bhattacharya Mahodaya*, ed. Arthur Avalon [Sir John Woodroffe] (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1960), pp. 208-13.

29) W. Ward, *A View of the History, Literature, and Religion of the Hindoos* (3rd ed. abr.; London: Black, Parbury, & Allen, Booksellers to the Hon. East India Co., 1817), pp. 146-47. Ward may be mistaken in attributing this story to the *Adhyātma Rāmāyana*. Sir Monier-Williams, *Brāhmanism and Hindūism* (London: John Murray, 1887), alludes to the same myth and says it is found in the *Adbhūta Rāmāyana*, pp. 189-90n.

dominates the action. Śiva is summoned to remedy the situation, to be sure, but he can only do so by lying beneath her feet. He subdues her, certainly, but only in the most humiliating way. Here, clearly, Kālī has triumphed over Śiva — has moved to the foreground as the more powerful of the two. And this dominant position is to be seen elsewhere: in certain Tantric literature, and in Bengali Śākta devotion-alism.

VI. *Kālī and the Tantric Hero*

I suggested above that among the three most important factors operative in effecting Kālī's "completion" as a great deity in her own right was her popularity in Tantrism. Coincident with the rise of Tantrism was the increasing popularity of the feminine in the Indian tradition. While goddesses were known and worshiped in Hinduism prior to the Tantric "epidemic," it was in the early medieval period (from the seventh century A.D. onward) that the Goddess (or the goddesses) assumed a popularity that was far more overwhelming than anything in the past. To what extent Tantrism encouraged, reinforced, or even presupposed the emergence of the Goddess is difficult to determine. That the increasing importance of the feminine blended well with certain Tantric emphases, however, is clear. For an essential aspect of Tantrism (both Hindu and Buddhist) is the interplay, union, and symbiotic relationship of the male and female aspects of reality (Śiva and Śakti in Hinduism, Upāya and Prajñā in Buddhism). Just when and how Kālī became accepted into the Tantric tradition is obscure.³⁰ By late medieval times (fourteenth to sixteenth centuries), though, she was intimately associated with Tantrism, particularly Tantrism of the left-handed, esoteric tradition, or that aspect of the Tantric tradition which emphasized the path of the hero (*vīra*).³¹

30) The Hindu Tantras are almost invariably set in the context of divine revelation (or divine discourse) in which Śiva instructs Pārvatī or in which Pārvatī is the teacher. Never, to my knowledge, does Kālī play either role. Pārvatī alone seems to play the role of disciple or teacher.

31) The Vāmācāra, in which Kālī comes to play an important, if not central, role, seems to have been most popular in Bengal and Assam, those areas where she is still most widely worshiped, and may suggest that Kālī originally came from the northeastern area of India. However, her place as a village deity in South India and her association with the Vindhya Mountains suggest that she was probably not indigenous to Bengal alone.

In many Tantric texts Kālī's position is unambiguously declared to be that of a great deity; indeed, in many texts she is declared to be the supreme deity, triumphant over all others, equivalent, in fact, to Brahman. In the *Nirvāṇa-tantra* the great gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva are said to arise from her like bubbles from the sea, endlessly arising and passing away, leaving their source unchanged. Compared to Kālī, proclaims this text, the gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva are equivalent only to the amount of water in a cow's hoofprint compared to the waters of the sea.³²⁾ The *Nigama-kalpataru* and the *Picchilā-tantra* declare that of all mantras Kālī's is the greatest.³³⁾ The *Yoginī-tantra*, the *Kāmākhya-tantra*, and *Niruttara-tantra* all proclaim Kālī the greatest of the Vidyās (the manifestations of the Goddess), or divinity itself; indeed, they declare her to be the essence or own form (*svabhāva*) of the Goddess.³⁴⁾ The *Kāmadā-tantra* states unequivocally that she is attributeless, neither male nor female, sinless, the imperishable *saccidānanda*, Brahman Itself.³⁵⁾ In the *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra*, too, "Kālī" is one of the most common epithets for the primordial Śakti (e.g., 5. 140-41; 6. 68-76; 10. 102), and in one passage Śiva praises her as follows:

At the Dissolution of things, it is Kāla Who will devour all, and by reason of this He is called Mahākāla, and since Thou devourest Mahākāla Himself, it is Thou who are the Supreme Primordial Kālikā. Because Thou devourest Kāla, Thou art Kālī, because Thou art the Origin of and devourest all things Thou art called the Ādya Kālī. Resuming after dissolution Thine own nature, dark and formless, ineffable and inconceivable Thou alone remainest as the One. Though having a form, yet art Thou formless; though Thyself without beginning, multiform by the power of Māyā, Thou art the Beginning of all, Creatrix, Protectress, and Destructress that Thou art.³⁶⁾

As has been said, why and how Kālī came to be associated with Tantrism is not clear, nor is it clear how she came to gain such a pre-eminent position. Given certain Tantric philosophical and ritual presuppositions, however, the following line of argument seems quite probable.

32) *Principles of Tantra*, pp. 327-28.

33) *Hymn to Kālī (Karpūradī-stotra)*, ed. and trans. Arthur Avalon [Sir John Woodroffe] (3rd ed.; Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1965), p. 34.

34) *Ibid.*

35) *Ibid.*

36) IV. 29-34; *The Great Liberation (Mahānirvāṇa Tantra)*, trans. Arthur Avalon [Sir John Woodroffe] (4th ed.; Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1963), pp. 69-70.

Tantrism generally is ritually oriented. By means of various rituals (exterior and interior, bodily and mental) the *sādhaka* (practitioner) seeks to gain *mokṣa* (release, salvation). A consistent theme in this endeavor is the uniting of opposites (male-female, microcosm-macrocosm, sacred-profane, Śiva-Śakti). In Tantrism there is an elaborate subtle geography of the body that must be learned, controlled, and ultimately resolved in unity. By means of the body — both the physical and subtle bodies — the *sādhaka* may manipulate various levels of reality and harness the dynamics of those levels to the attainment of his goal. The *sādhaka*, with the help of a guru, undertakes to gain his goal by conquest, by using his own body and knowledge of that body to bring the fractured world of name and form, the polarized world of male and female, sacred and profane, to wholeness and unity. In Vāmācāra *sādhana* this quest takes a particularly dramatic form. In his attempt to realize the nature of the world as completely and thoroughly pervaded by the one Śakti, the *sādhaka* (the *vīra*, the hero) undertakes the ritual known as *pañca-tattva* (or *pañca-makāra*), the ritual of the five (“forbidden”) things (or truths). In a ritual context and under the supervision of his guru the *sādhaka* partakes of wine, meat, fish, parched grain, and sexual intercourse. In this way he overcomes the distinction (or duality) of clean and unclean, sacred and profane, and breaks his bondage to a world artificially fragmented. He affirms in a radical way the underlying unity of the phenomenal world, the identity of Śakti with the whole creation. Heroically, he triumphs over social, moral, and physical boundaries that divide the one Śakti. By partaking of the forbidden, by indulging himself in it ritually, he triumphs over it, controls and masters it. By affirming the essential worth of the forbidden, the forbidden loses its power to pollute, to degrade, to bind.³⁷)

The figure of Kālī conveys the image of death, destruction, fear, terror, the all-consuming aspect of reality. As such we might say she is also a “forbidden thing,” or the forbidden par excellence, for she is death itself. For the Tantric hero the forbidden is not to be

37) For the *pañca-tattva* ritual see *Mahānirvāna-tantra* V and VI; A. Bharati, *The Tantric Tradition* (London: Rider & Co., 1965), pp. 228 ff.; Mircea Eliade, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, trans. Williard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), pp. 254 ff.; and Henrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, ed. Joseph Campbell (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 572 ff.

propitiated, feared, ignored, or avoided. Given the rationale of the *pañca-tattva* ritual, Kālī is confronted boldly by the *sādhaka* and thereby assimilated, overcome, and transformed into a vehicle of salvation. This is particularly clear in the *Karpūrādi-stotra*, a short work in praise of Kālī that describes the *pañca-tattva* ritual as performed in the cremation ground (*śmaśāna sādhana*). Throughout this text Kālī is described in familiar terms. She is black (vs. 1), with disheveled hair, blood trickles from her mouth (vs. 3), she holds a sword and a severed head (vs. 4), wears a girdle of severed arms, sits on a corpse in the cremation ground (vs. 7), and is surrounded by skulls, bones, and female jackals (vs. 8). And it is she, when confronted boldly in meditation, who gives the *sādhaka* great power and ultimately salvation. In her favorite dwelling place, the cremation ground, the heroic *sādhaka* with his female companion (*śakti*) meditates on every terrible aspect of the Black Goddess and thus achieves his goal.

He, O Mahākālī, who in the cremation-ground, naked, and with disheveled hair, intently meditates upon Thee and recites Thy *mantra*, and with each recitation makes offering to Thee of a thousand *Akanda* flowers with seed, becomes without any effort a Lord of the earth.

O Kālī, whoever on Tuesday at midnight, having uttered Thy *mantra*, makes offering even but once with devotion to Thee of a hair of his *Śakti* in the cremation-ground, becomes a great poet, a Lord of the earth, and even goes mounted upon an elephant.³⁸)

Here it is clear that Kālī is more than a terrible, ferocious slayer of demons who serves Durgā (or Śiva) on the battlefield. In fact, she is by and large disassociated from the battle context. She is the supreme mistress of the universe (vs. 12), she is identified with the five elements (vs. 14), and in union with Śiva (who is clearly identified as her spouse) she creates and destroys the worlds. Her appearance has also been modified befitting her exalted position as ruler of the world and the object of meditation by which the *sādhaka* attains liberation. In addition to her terrible aspects (which are insisted upon) there are now hints of another, benign dimension. So, for example, she no longer is described as emaciated or ugly. In the *Karpūrādi-stotra* she is young and beautiful (vs. 1), she has a gently smiling face (vs. 18), and her two right hands make gestures that

38) *Karpūrādi-stotra* 15-16 (*Hymn to Kālī*, pp. 84, 86).

dispel fear and offer boons (vs. 4). These positive features are entirely apt, as Kālī no longer is a mere shrew, the distillation of Durgā's wrath, but is she through whom the hero achieves success, she who grants the boon of salvation and who, when boldly approached, frees the *sādhaka* from fear itself. She is here not only the symbol of death but the symbol of triumph over death. In Tantrism Kālī has come to represent the forbidden par excellence, on the one hand, and the bountiful, fear-dispelling, boon-conferring goddess on the other. Through bold confrontation the heroic practitioner finds within the terrifying, forbidden, frightening presence of Kālī the key to his triumph over his own fears. The Tantric hero has refused to flee before the wrath of the Goddess and in that refusal has gained mastery over her and over himself.

VII. Kālī in Bengali Devotionalism

The third important factor that was mentioned earlier in Kālī's "completion" is the devotionalism of Bengal Śākta devotees. This devotion is typified by two of Bengal's most famous religious figures: Rāmprasād and Ramakrishna.

The eighteenth-century Bengali saint Rāmprasād Sen saw in Kālī not only the ferocious, wild aspect of the divine. He saw in her, too, the benign, the loving, the comforting. For Rāmprasād worshiped Kālī first and foremost as Mother, as she who scolds and punishes, but who ultimately soothes and protects her children. Rāmprasād did not obscure Kālī's terrible aspect in the least. He reveled in describing her strange and wild appearance. He recognized her as extraordinarily strange and frequently called her mad. But he was never put off by her appearance, as the child is never put off by the blustering of his mother. No matter how uncaring or cruel she may seem, the child's only hope is finally in his mother's mercy. So Rāmprasād sings:

I shall take refuge in my Mother's feet; where shall I go at this time of my distress?

If there is no room for me at Her abode, I will lie outside; there is no harm in it.

Fasting with Her name as my support, I will lie outside Her abode.

Prasāda says: "I will not leave Her even if Umā turns me out;

I will catch hold of Her feet with outstretched arms and give up my life." ³⁹⁾

39) *Rama Prasada's Devotional Songs: The Cult of Shakti*, trans. Jadunath Sinha (Calcutta: Sinha Publishing House, 1966), no. 12, p. 6.

Like the Tantric hero, Rāmprasād is not afraid of Kālī's appearance but fascinated by it. He makes no attempt to soften her appearance. Rather, he is amazed by it, for he knows well that she is his Mother.

Thou laughest aloud (striking terror); streams of blood flow from Thy limbs.
O Tārā, doer of good, the good of all, grantor of safety, O Mother, grant
me safety.

O Mother Kālī! come now as Tārā with a smiling face and clad in white;
As dawn descends on dense darkness of the night.

O Mother! terrific Kālī! I have worshiped Thee alone so long.

My worship is finished; now, O Mother, bring down Thy sword.⁴⁰⁾

In contrast to the Tantric *sādhaka*, who approaches Kālī heroically and confidently, however, Rāmprasād approaches Kālī through means of *prapatti*, through self-surrender. He admits helplessness before her and throws himself abjectly on her mercy. The Tantric *sādhaka* is granted Kālī's boon of fearlessness by boldly conquering her. Rāmprasād is granted her boon by steadfast, childlike petition. Both the Tantric *sādhaka* and Rāmprasād tame Kālī, or succeed in seeing behind her terrific exterior. The former achieves this by assault and the latter by means of a child's persistent and all-consuming love.

Perhaps the final chapter in Kālī's "taming," in her transformation from a shrew to a loving mother, is seen in the biography of the famous nineteenth-century saint Ramakrishna. In the tradition of Rāmprasād and other Śākta devotees, Ramakrishna's relationship to Kālī was intensely personal. For him she was the loving Mother who never refused to pamper her child. Even more than Rāmprasād he embodied the naïve, childlike simplicity of the ardent devotee of the Mother. As a temple priest at the newly established Kālī temple at Dakṣiṇeśvar near Calcutta he spent his entire life as her full-time servant, doting on her constantly. He was divorced from worldly problems and was free to devote his entire life to her service. In this situation his childlike nature could express itself fully and freely. When Ramakrishna approached Kālī he did so as the child he was, with utter simplicity, whole-hearted eagerness, and complete *naïveté*. He is described by one of his disciples as follows:

Like a drunkard, he would reel to the throne of the Mother, touch her chin by way of showing his affection for Her, and sing, talk, joke, laugh, and dance. ... As his spiritual mood deepened he more and more felt himself to

40) *Ibid.*, no. 221, pp. 118-19.

be a child of the Divine Mother. He learnt to surrender himself completely to Her will and let her direct him.⁴¹⁾

And as Ramakrishna was childlike when he approached Kālī, she, too, became like a child in response to him. Behind her dreadful appearance she finally revealed to Ramakrishna that hidden child. Ramakrishna himself relates a vision he had of her: "She came to me ... as a (Muslim) girl six or seven years old. She had a tilak on her forehead and was naked. She walked with me, joking and frisking like a child."⁴²⁾

In Bengal today Kālī is extremely popular. Her images are found in thousands of temples throughout the country, and on Kālī-pūjā day thousands of additional temporary images are set up in *pandals* throughout the state. In South Calcutta, in the Keoratala-śmaśāna, one of the largest cremation grounds in the city, an immense image of Kālī is set up. Large crowds jam the vicinity and jostle the funeral processions that stream to the burning ground twenty-four hours a day. Shortly after midnight, to the sharp staccato beat of drums and the shouts of the assembly, "Victory to Kālī, victory to the Mother," several black goats are beheaded and offered to the goddess (as they are every day at the nearby Kālighat temple). The funeral pyres blaze in the background, and the Black Goddess is served. Kālī retains her fierce appearance and her appetite for blood, clearly. But alongside many of her images on this day, Ramakrishna and his wife are shown sitting placidly. Kālī stands behind them, looking terrible as ever, but her hands are placed gently on their heads. There she stands, lolling tongue, bloodied sword, and all — but comforting her trusting children. She is tamed.

VIII. *Summary and Conclusions*

Kālī breaks into Hinduism in a battle context. She is born of wrath and epitomizes the fearful, vicious aspects of death and destruction. She is cruel, ferocious, and horrible to look at. She delights in slaughter, and her weird howl and uncanny laughter terrify her enemies.

41) M. [Mahendranath Gupta], *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, translated from the Bengali by Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1942), pp. 14-15.

42) *Ibid.*, p. 175.

In later purāṇic and Tantric literature none of Kālī's rough edges are smoothed or ignored. In the purāṇas, though, she becomes associated with Śiva and an "established" mythological tradition. As his wife, consort, or even antagonist, she is incorporated into the tradition and, in some cases, becomes identified with a milder dimension of divinity. In the Tantras she maintains her fierce aspect but is confronted fearlessly by the hero, who thus identifies with her and thereby controls her and wins her boons.

In the devotion of Rāmprasād and Ramakrishna, Kālī is addressed as Mother. Despite her strange appearance and weird behavior, these two Bengali saints saw in her a loving mother. They apparently saw behind or beneath her ferocity an enduring love. They saw her external appearance as a mask, and by persistently approaching her as children, they succeeded in making her take off that mask.

What the symbol of Kālī signifies and what her taming means are difficult questions to answer. Religious symbols are frequently very difficult to understand and, if understood, their content difficult to express in ordinary language. No matter what we may say about such symbols, their meaning never seems to be exhausted by our commentary.

There are a few things, nevertheless, that seem quite clear in the divine symbol of Kālī and the sequence of events that "tamed" that goddess. In the image of Kālī, the Indian spiritual tradition has affirmed that the divine contains within itself ferocious qualities. It has affirmed that the divine often reveals itself as something totally other, as something uncontrollable (indeed, out of control), tumultuous, as something intoxicated if not mad.

And as Kālī is identified with the world order, particularly the process of birth, decay, and death, the Indian tradition has affirmed that all the ephemeral, phantasmagoric, fleeting aspects of life are pervaded by the divine, that in a sense these painful aspects of reality have been sanctified by the divine. The image of Kālī, furthermore, teaches man that pain and sorrow, decay, death, and destruction are not to be overcome or conquered by denying them or by explaining them away. Pain and sorrow are woven into the texture of man's life so thoroughly that to deny them is ultimately futile and foolish. For man to realize the fulness of his being, for man to exploit his potential as a spiritual being, he must finally accept this dimension of his existence.

This is what the various myths concerning Kālī's "completion," or "taming," are about. This is what the *sādhana* of the Tantric hero and the devotion of Rāmprasād and Ramakrishna seek to come to terms with.⁴³) Śiva's defeat of Kālī in the dance tournament dramatically portrays the process of yogic control of flux by heroically annihilating it, subduing it, calming its inherent will to multiply and diversify blindly. The myths that depict Kālī as dominant, on the other hand, demonstrate a different, but nevertheless efficacious, means of coming to terms with this being and what she represents. When Kālī is shown standing on the prone Śiva, or when she otherwise dominates or terrifies him, she is dramatically thrust into the foreground to be confronted and "assimilated." In these myths and icons the proper response is not annihilation of her but exaltation-presentation of her — the devotee or practitioner is invited to take a long, hard, realistic look. He is forced to meditate upon she who dramatically represents what Heinrich Zimmer calls the "dumb rage of creation," "the tyrant-

43) Admirers of Bengali literature might point out that if this interpretation were correct, then such famous Bengali figures as Bankim Chatterjee and Rabindrānath Tagore chose not to come to terms with Kālī and what she represents, and thereby invited the wrath of the goddess. Both were suspicious of her and tended to interpret her negatively. Tagore's drama *Sacrifice* is a clear denunciation of her cult, while Chatterjee's *Kopal-kundala* does not tend to see in Kālī a redeeming figure but primarily a goddess who belonged to the fringes of society. This is certainly an understandable criticism, and I am not about to insist upon my interpretation as the only legitimate one.

I should add here, too, that there are important aspects of Kālī's history that I have not treated thoroughly, or indeed at all, in this paper. Her place in Kashmir Tantrism has still to be studied. The extent of her role in Buddhist Tantrism has not been mentioned and is by and large unknown to me. Kālī also has an extremely important role as a local, village goddess in Bengal, where she is associated with disease and such goddesses (primarily Bengali) as Śītālā and Manasā. Kālī also played an important role in Bengali "nationalism" in the early part of the twentieth century during the British partition of Bengal (1905-7). (See Al. Carhill, *The Lost Dominion* [Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1924]; Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* [London: Macmillan & Co., 1910]; and Ernest A. Payne, *The Śāktas* [Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1938].) At this time, for many, she came to symbolize Bengal itself. I have also neglected to discuss Kālī's association with the Thugs (George Bruce, *The Stranglers, The Cult of Thuggee and Its Overthrow in British India* [London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1968], and Tucker, *The Yellow Scarf*) and other criminal groups. A decidedly different interpretation of Kālī is also seen in recent attempts to rationalize or allegorize her fierce appearance (Constance Kapera, *The Worship of Kālī in Banaras: An Inquiry* [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, n.d.], esp. pp. 94-101).

nical scream of the newborn for food and warmth," the "whip that drives life through the 'night of all.'" 44) He is to realize that he is part of this irresistible, unquenchable thirsting. He is to realize that he is inevitably destined to perish. By such confrontation the beholder puts the spotlight, as it were, on those darker, murkier, "forbidden" dimensions of his being. He lets the ghosts and frightening monsters of his instinctual and subconscious being emerge into the light, where they are aired, studied, and consciously accepted.

If the beholder is of heroic nature, he will conquer this terrifying dimension of reality by boldly partaking of it, by denying dramatically and ritually its power to bind him spiritually; he will pursue the path of the Tantric hero. 45) If he is of another nature, he will accept it

44) Henrich Zimmer, "Die Indische Weltmutter," *Erano's Jahrbuch*, VI, 208, 217.

45) The heroic response to Kālī does not have to take place ritually, or even within the limits of Tantrism, as the following hymn to Kālī by Vivekananda shows:

The stars are blotted out,
Clouds are covering clouds,
It is darkness, vibrant, sonant.
In the roaring whirling wind
Are the souls of a million lunatics, —
Just loose from the prison house, —
Wrenching trees by the roots,
Sweeping all from the path.
The sea has joined the fray,
And swirls up mountain-waves,
To reach the pitchy sky.

The flash of lurid light

Reveals on every side

A thousand, thousand shades

Of Death begrimed and black —

Scattering plagues and sorrows,

Dancing mad with joy,

Come, Mother, Come!

For Terror is thy name,

Death is in Thy breath,

And every shaking step

Destroys a world for e'er.

Thou "Time," the All-Destroyer!

Come, O Mother, Come!

Who dares misery love,

And hugs the form of Death —

Dance in destruction's dance,

To him the Mother comes.

Cited in Sister Nivedita (M. E. Noble), *Kālī the Mother* (Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas: Advaita Ashrama, 1953), p. 105.

with the simplicity of a child — he will not fight against it, he will not whimper and whine, but will revel in life's moment. He will laugh and play with the "Mother," secure in both the inevitability of his own death and the obvious importance of affirming the moment. He will achieve the freedom, naïveté, and spontaneity of the child who lives from day to day, and in so living will have received the grace of the Mother.

Kālī no doubt expresses a good deal more than death and destruction, but she does express at least these things. So her "taming" or "completion" is the story of man's realization of this dimension of existence, and his conquest of death by confrontation and acceptance.

PROBLEMS OF TAO AND *TAO TE CHING* *) ¹⁾

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From ancient times until very recently, Lao-tzu as a man, *Tao Te Ching* as a book, and Tao as a philosophy were always problems to scholars. Now that we have come to the seventies of the twentieth century, when science and technology are so advanced, and scholarship has become more 'scientific', one may expect that the problems related to various classics in general and *Tao Te Ching* in particular should also become better understood, so that we may have a chance to do better than the scholars of the past. However, in spite of some fruit in the studies of this work, we still remain in a state of confusion, trying hard to understand what Tao is and who Lao-tzu was. Yet when one attempts to summarize the scholarly achievement on the subject, one would find that in many respects, it is always easy to raise questions, but hard to solve them.

With this frame of thinking in mind, the purpose of this paper is to discuss some of the problems in *Tao Te Ching*; and some parallels in other ancient texts that have been pointed out and debated by some scholars currently, especially Fung Yu-lan and his colleagues. This does not mean I am going to follow them nor attempt to solve some of these problems, but simply trying to point out the areas where research has come to a point of impossibility and the other areas in

*) This paper was originally prepared for and read before the Northeast Regional International Conference of Religion, American Academy of Religion, held at Syracuse, New York in March 1973 as the key speech to a workshop on *Tao Te Ching*. There are revisions in the present version of the paper.

The author.

1) Unless it is noted, the translations quoted in this paper are from W. T. Chan's *The Way of Lao Tzu*, the Library of Liberal Arts, (N.Y., 1963). Two other translations of *Tao Te Ching* have been used occasionally: *The Way and Its Power* by Arthur Waley (Evergreen edition, hereafter the work will be referred as Waley); and *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching* by D. C. Lau (Penguin Books, referred to in the paper as Lau).

which scholarly debates are still carried on. Professor Creel states the difficulty very well: "If any one is apprehensive that I am going to give an answer to the question posed... let me reassure him at once. I shall not be so foolish as to try to propound a single, sovereign definition of what Taoism is." ²⁾ However, a report with some reflections about the state of research on the book would be, no doubt, of some help to us: it would enable us to know the state where we are and what are the areas we may keep on trying to understand.

The study of the authorship and the date of compilation of *Tao Te Ching* has almost come to a stage of non-development. There are four schools of thought in the field: (1) Those who believe that Lao-tzu is identifiable with Lao Tan of sixth century B.C. and that he was a senior contemporary to and visited by Confucius. ³⁾ (2) Those who consider that Lao-tzu was a man of the Spring and Autumn period (B.C. 770-481), but that he was not the author of *Tao Te Ching*. (3) That he lived in the period of the Warring States (B.C. 404-222), though his authorship of the book is disputable within this group of scholars. (4) That he was not a historical person at all. After reviewing all the theories, Professor Chan states: "In the final analysis, any theory about Lao Tzu is a matter of personal choice"; it depends on "a willingness or unwillingness to accept certain sources as reliable." ⁴⁾ The same sentiment has also been expressed by the authority on Chinese philosophy, Fung Yu-lan. In his *New Compendium of the History of Chinese Philosophy*, Fung states:

The book of *Lao-tzu* is traditionally attributed to Lao-tzu. Who was Lao-tzu? What was his period? As early as in the second century B.C. there had already been different theories on these questions. Szu-ma Ch'ien, the Grand Historian, could not decide which theory is authentic, so, as a good historian, he recorded all theories available in his time, but refused to give his preference... He recorded: "Some say Tan was Lao-tzu while others say no. People today do not know who are right." ⁵⁾

He continues that "as we have not discovered anything newer than the material available to Szu-ma Ch'ien, thus it is impossible for us

²⁾ H. G. Creel, *What is Taoism? And other studies in Chinese Cultural History*, (Chicago, 1970), p. 1.

³⁾ Chan, *ibid.*, pp. 52, 58.

⁴⁾ *Ibid.*, pp. 51.

⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

to solve the problem that the Grand Historian was unable to." 6)

If historical study of Lao-tzu comes to a state of static; the disputes on him certainly will not stop. If scholars have debated for thousand years without any agreement, they will probably continue to put forward their wisdom and labour on the topic. Nevertheless, one would agree with Fung that unless some new materials will be discovered, no progress is possible.

The problem of *Tao Te Ching* as a book has also been debated in the last hundred years, yet no agreement has been reached. Nevertheless, the state of research does not look as confused as in the case of Lao-tzu. Generally speaking, there are two principal schools: one thinks the book was a work of a late age or the post-Spring and Autumn period; the other upholds the traditional account and believes that the work should be dated within the period. All of them do, however, agree that the present form of the book is a later revision or composition; though the exact date is very controversial.

Whatever the disputes and controversies about the book and the man might be, it is the philosophical concepts in the book that are most important to all concerned. They are, indeed, the most inspiring ideas that attracted scholars from ancient times to the present. It is these concepts that influenced Chinese civilization for a period of two thousand or more years and they have still remained attractive to us today.

What is Tao? This is a problem that has been discussed again and again. The early expositions on Tao have been dealt with by various experts in the field: summaries of various interpretations can be found in the work of Creel, Chan, Welch and Needham and it is unnecessary to repeat them. The debate on the problem by various scholars in China, especially the new works by Fung are still less known to scholars who are not acquainted with Chinese readings. Since the symposium on Taoism by Western scholars has begun to draw scholarly attention to the subject, 7) a review of recent Chinese

6) Fung, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh-shih hsin-pien*, (Peking, 1964), pp. 249 and 250. Except for the quotation cited in note 5, the rest are my translations from Chinese text.

7) Parts of the papers contributed to the Symposium on Taoist Studies have been published in *History of Religions*, IX/2-3 (1969-70). More active publication of Taoist researches is being done in Japan under the sponsorship of the Taoist Research Society.

scholarship in the field becomes necessary. This is so because to most people who live in non-Chinese cultural areas, the problem of understanding Taoism is more or less an academic one; whereas within the Chinese tradition, the problem is more alive and crucial as well. Their affirmation or rejection, modification or continuation of Taoist Substratum in their life will have an immense effect on the tradition in its various aspects. However, because of time and space, the best I can do is to focus the discussion on Fung's new interpretation of Tao; and the view from the opposites. The problem of the possible Indian influence on Taoism will be dealt with briefly as there are some claims in this regard.

I

During the last two decades, Fung continued his writings on the history of Chinese philosophy with a Marxist viewpoint of interpretations. In spite of constant and fierce criticism from his opponents, Fung still upholds his views on Taoism. In his book, the *New Compendium* as well as in a few other papers.⁸⁾ Fung has made two contributions to the field: in the first place, he had his new interpretation of Tao; in the second place, he has explicitly explained the methodology of his research on Taoist philosophy. One may add one more item that the discussion had also extended to the other contemporary Chinese classics apart from well-known Taoist ones.

In the book and the papers, Fung has pointed out that Taoism did actually exist as a school in ancient China. Though he agrees that the Taoist school had no organisation or close connection between individual thinkers, nevertheless, such was a common feature with most of ancient Chinese schools of thought except Mo-chia or Mohism. Under that circumstance, the criterion for the study of a school should lay more stress on its central ideas rather than review it from the other angles. According to him, the central idea of Taoists in the ancient period was Self-preservation (*wei-wo*). Self-preservation means to place one's own interest above all the others; and the search for

8) Three of these articles have been noted by W. T. Chan, *Chinese Philosophy 1949-1963: An annotated bibliography of Mainland China Publications*, (Honolulu, 1967), pp. 129-130. More papers on early Taoist thought have been collected in Fung's *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh-shih lun-wen chi* ('Essays on History of Chinese Philosophy'), 1st series (Shanghai, 1958) and 2nd series (Macao, 1962?).

greatest benefit for oneself is the supreme goal of life. The relationship between Philosophical and Religious Taoism has been puzzling scholars for a longtime, since the ideas of indifference to life and death as taught by the philosophers are contradictory with the search for physical immortality as urged by Taoist priests.⁹⁾ In a recent paper by E. Marie Ch'en, some hints has been expressed on the common ground of Philosophical and Religious Taoism though she is still unable to find textual evidences from *Tao Te Ching* to support the theory of physical immortality.¹⁰⁾ Taking the passages quoted by Ch'en and comparing them with the broader definition of Taoism as made by Fung, one would find that inspite of contradictions between philosophical and religious Taoisms, their aim of 'preserving of life' was quite consistent and congruous.

Though all branches of Taoism aimed at Self-preservation, the way of achieving it varied with the branches. Fung divides the Taoism in ancient China into five branches, viz., (1) those who insisted on preservation of one's own life as represented by Yang Chu, (2) those who laid stress on the satisfaction of one's desires as represented by *Lieh-tzu*, (3) those who gave emphasis to longevity as represented by Sung and Yin, (4) those who aimed at escaping from harm by the understanding of Tao as represented by *Tao Te Ching*, and (5) those who thought that 'to forget oneself' is the surest path to preserve themselves. The last is represented by *Chuang-tzu*.¹¹⁾ Comparing this classification of philosophic Taoism with the 'contemplative' (*Chuang-tzu*) and the 'purposive' (*Tao Te Ching*) Taoism as classified by Creel,¹²⁾ Fung's grouping of Taoist thinkers is large in scope

9) Creel says that "Hsien Taoism also incorporates elements from Confucianism, Moism, and Buddhism. But there is one element that we might expect to find which is completely absent from Hsien Taoism. That is the central insight of philosophical Taoism." *Op. cit.*, p. 24. See also H. Welch, *Taoism, the parting of the Way*, (Beacon edition, 1966), pp. 88 ff.

10) E. M. Chen, "Is There a doctrine of Physical Immortality in the *Tao Te Ching*?" *History of Religions*, XII/3 (1973), pp. 231-249.

11) Most of Fung's interpretations of Tao mentioned in this paper are based on his article, "Hsien-ch'in tao-chia che-hsüeh chung-yao ming-tz'u t'ung-shih" or "General explanations of the important terms in the philosophy of Taoist schools in the pre-Ch'in times", in *Lao-tzu che-hsüeh t'ao-lun-chi* or '*A Symposium on the Philosophy of Lao Tzu*', (Peking, 1959). Hereafter, the book is referred to as *Symposium.*) pp. 83 ff.

12) Creel, *op. cit.*, pp. 5 ff.

and detailed in classification. Whether or not those thinkers other than Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu were Taoists is, of course, still open to dispute. Nonetheless, Fung's theory of Self-preservation as the central criterion of Taoism is worthy for consideration.

On the problem of methodology, Fung considers that the present stage of research on Tao is much influenced by commentaries. As far as *Tao Te Ching* is concerned, the influence of Wang Pi (A.D. 226-249) is predominant.¹³⁾ Like most commentarial works, Wang's commentary which claimed to be explanations of *Tao Te Ching*, is actually, a manifestation of his own philosophy. If one wishes to know the original form of Taoism in the pre-Ch'in period of China, the most important task is to free oneself from the commentarial interpretations as a precondition. Only after that, the Taoist and the non-Taoist materials may be collected and compared in order to analyse their descriptions of the terms in Taoist texts. From this, the differences among the Taoist schools may be reveal.

Taking the sentence: "Deep and obscure, in it is the essence. The essence is very real..." (XXI) from *Tao Te Ching* as for an example, it refers to the word *ching* only two or three times. The word has been translated as essence, substance, stuff etc. If the word is read within the textual limit of the book, it will be difficult to realize its importance as the occurrences of the word are fewer. However, if it is regarded as a technical term of the tradition and be understood in the light of other Taoist texts, the word becomes more significant. According to the "Nei-yeh" chapter of *Kuan-tzu* which is probably a piece of work belong to a branch of Taoism, the essence or the breath of life (*ching-ch'i* or *ling-ch'i*) is Tao itself. It says:

In the heart the subtle breath of life sometimes comes and sometimes disappears.

It is so small that nothing can exist within it.

It is so large that nothing can exist outside it.

We lose it by being hasty so that we suffer harm.

If the heart can be controlled and made quiescent,

The Way will become stabilized of itself.¹⁴⁾

13) For Wang's philosophy and his place in Taoist Metaphysical School, see Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. II, translated by D. Bodde, (Princeton, 1953), pp. 168 ff. For selected translations of Wang's commentary on *Lao Tzu*, see Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, (Princeton, 1963), pp. 321 ff.

14) Translation quoted here is from W. A. Rickett, *Kuan-tzu, A Repository*

From this passage, Fung says that in the view of this branch of Taoism, Tao is the Force of life or the Breath of life, which "is what fills the body".¹⁵⁾ The "Nei-yeh" chapter further states:

Now forms are fulfilled by means of the Way,
 Yet men are unable to hold it firmly.
 Once it is gone it may not return,
 Once it has come it may not remain.

 How silent! No one hears its sound.
 How compact! It resides, then, in the heart.
 How obscure! No one sees its form.
 How bounteous! It is born together with me.

 Its form cannot be seen, its sound cannot be heard.
 Yet we may trace its achievements —
 Such we call the Way.¹⁶⁾

Comparing this passage with *Tao Te Ching*, the similarities between the two texts supports Fung's argument. The *Tao Te Ching* states:

We look at it and do not see it;
 Its name is The Invisible.
 We listen to it and do not hear it;
 Its name is The Inaudible.
 We touch it and do not find it;
 Its name is The Subtle (formless).
 These Three cannot be further inquired into,
 And hence merge into one.
 Going up high, it is not bright, and coming down low, it is not dark.
 Infinite and boundless, it cannot be given any name;
 It reverts to nothingness.
 This is called shape without shape,
 Form without objects... (XIV)

of *Early Chinese Thought*, vol. I, (Hongkong), 1965), p. 168. For the dates and authorship of various essays as collected in the book, see pp. 155-158. For Fung's recent views on this work, see Fung, *op. cit.*, fn. 8, pp. 287 ff. The word *ching* has been translated by Legge, Chan and Lau as "Essence", Waley as "Force", Strauss as "*geist*", Weiss and Forke as "*kraft*", (see, A. Ohama, *Roshi no tetsugaku* or 'The Philosophy of Lao Tzu', Tokyo, 1970, p. 30) and B. Watson as "spiritual essence" or "the vital energy of body". In a later article, "Lun hsien-ch'in tao-chia che-hsüeh szu-hsiang" ('The Philosophical Thought of Taoists in Pre-Ch'in China'), Fung still upholds his early view that these chapters of *Kuan-tzu* are Taoist works. He has however, changed his view on authorship of these papers: he now thinks that they belong neither to Sung/Yin school nor the Taoist school. He speculates that Sung/Yin were Mohists. See his 'Essays on History of Chinese Philosophy', second series, pp. 276-283.

¹⁵⁾ Rickett, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

¹⁶⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

From this Fung thinks that in these texts, Tao has been clearly described as the Force of Essence. This force is within the human body by its own tendency, yet when man does not preserve it with care, the force would "gone it may not return... Come it may not remain". The force is very subtle; it can not be determined as objects by sense organs. As Tao is the Force of Essence, it is naturally beyond the senses of audibility and visibility. The chapter further states:

It is ever so that the Way has no fixed place,
Yet it will peacefully settle in a good heart.
The heart being quiescent, the breath of life is regular.
And thus the Way may be made to stay.¹⁷⁾

According to this school of Taoism, it is only when human mind is empty and calm, the Force of Essence will concentrate in it. The last line quoted above explains this very well.

If the above mentioned statement is acceptable, then Tao is the Force of Essence or Breath of Life. It is the subtle material, which has been defined by another work "Hsin Shu", also a chapter of *Kuan-tzu*: "The Way lies between Heaven and earth. It is so large that nothing can exist outside it. It is so small that nothing can exist within it."¹⁸⁾ A similar description is also available on the Spirit of Life (*ling-ch'i*): "It is so small that nothing can exist within it. It is so large that nothing can exist outside it." Because the material is subtle and minute, it cannot be divided further; thus it is described as "nothing can exist within it"; and because it "sprinkles and fills the whole world" or "exists everywhere",¹⁹⁾ that is why it is described as "It is so large that nothing can exist outside it." And because it is the subtlest and minutest material, it cannot be the object of sense organs, that is why it has been described as "What is vacuous and formless we call the Way."²⁰⁾ The "Hsin-shu" chapter describes the situation quite well. It says:

Concerning the Way, when it moves men do not see its form; when it is diffused they do not see its Power. Yet all things thereby attain to what they are and no one knows its limits.²¹⁾

17) *Ibid.*

18) *Ibid.*, p. 173.

19) *Ibid.*, p. 162.

20) *Ibid.*, p. 174.

21) *Ibid.*, p. 175.

This means that all things became themselves only because they had derived their Powers from the Tao. This description is also confirmed by a passage from the chapter "Nei-yeh" of the same book. It says:

It is ever so that the Way has neither roots nor stalks,
Leaves nor flowers.
Yet what gives life to all things and brings them to perfection,
It termed the Way.²²⁾

In short, according to Fung, all these passages meant one thing, that the Tao mentioned in *Tao Te Ching* is identical with the *ch'i* (force) or *ching-ch'i* (forces of essence) or *ling-ch'i* (spirit of life or breath of life). It is a material, subtle but basic to everything.

II

After he identified Tao with the Essence or the Breath of life, Fung comes back to the text of *Tao Te Ching*. He concludes Tao or Way as described in the text according to five characteristics.

(I) Tao is non-being (*wu*). The term non-being is an abbreviation of nameless (*wu-ming*) and formless (*wu-hsing*). The text says:

We look at it and do not see it;
Its name is The Invisible.
We listen to it and do not hear it;
Its name is The Inaudible.
We touch it and do not find it;
Its name is The Subtle (formless).
These three cannot be further inquired into,
and hence merged into one.
Going up high, it is not bright, and coming down low, it is not dark.
Infinite and boundless, it cannot be given any name;
It reverts to nothingness.
This is called shape without shape,
Form without objects.
It is the Vague and Elusive.
Meet it and you will not see its head.
follow it and you will not see its back.
Hold on to the Tao of old in order to master the things of the present.
From this one may know the primeval beginning (of the universe).
This is called the bond of Tao. (XIV)

Another description of Tao is found in *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*:

22) *Ibid.*, p. 160.

The Tao is what is invisible when one sees, inaudible when one listens to and it cannot be described. Now if one has the vision of invisibility, the audition of inaudibility and the form of formlessness, one is then close to the knowledge of it. The Tao is fundamental Essence. It cannot be described in form nor it is namable. If one is forced to give it a name, it is called the Great One (*t'ai-i*)²³

Here, in the book, the same question is raised as has been raised in *Tao Te Ching* XIV. The answer to the question is quite identical as well, viz., that it is the subtlest force, hence it is invisible and inaudible. It has been declared right from the beginning of *Tao Te Ching* that

The Tao that can be told of is not the eternal Tao;
The name that can be named is not the eternal name.
The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;
The Named is the mother of all things. (I)

In another place, it also stated that "the Tao is eternal and has no name" (XXXII). Why is it unnamable or nameless? *Kuan-tzu* contains a passage to answer the question: it is because "things have definite forms. Forms have definite names (*ming*)."²⁴ So the names come after forms. A similar statement is also found in *Han-fei-tzu*: "In general, anything that has a form can be easily cut."²⁵ Forms meant the size and shape of things. As Tao has no such form, therefore, it has no such name. In other words, it has to be nameless.

(2) The second characteristic of Tao is that it is eternal (*ch'ang*). There are quite a number of references in this regard as found in *Tao Te Ching* where Tao is described as eternal (I, XVI, XXXII, XXXVII, LII, LV). To say Tao is eternal means that it is lasting foreve. A more precise description on the subject also exist in *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*: "The Round Tao is one, which is comparable to most noble one. Its origin is unknown and its manifestations (literarily, 'corners') are unknown and its beginning and end are unknown. Yet myriad things respect it as their ancestor."²⁶ This

23) *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* or 'the Spring and Autumn of Mr. Lü' (Szu-pu ts'ung-k'an ch'u-pein sopen edition), vol. 95, p. 30 b. Hereafter, it is referred as *Lü*. The translations are mine.

24) Rickett, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

25) *The complete Works of Han Fei Tzu*, translated by W. K. Liao, (London, reprint 1959), vol. I, pp. 200. Hereafter, it is referred as the *Complete works*.

26) *Lü*, *op. cit.*, p. 22a-b.

is what "the Tao is eternal" means; and in Fung's judgement, this is the only meaning of the word.

The statement that Tao is eternal does not mean that Tao is motionless and unchanging. The *Han-fei-tzu* explains:

In general, principles are what distinguish the square from the round, the short from the long, the coarse from the fine, and the hard from the brittle. Accordingly, it is only after principles become definite that things can attain Tao. Thus definite principles include those of existence and extinction, of life and death, and of rise and fall. Indeed, anything that first exists and next goes to ruin, now lives and then dies, and prospers at the beginning and declines afterward, cannot be said to be eternal. Only that which begins with the creation of heaven and earth and neither dies nor declines till heaven and earth disappear can be said to be eternal. What is eternal has neither a changing location nor a definite principle and is not inherent in an eternal place. Therefore the eternal cannot be traced as a way. The saintly man, looking at its mysterious emptiness and dwelling upon its universal course, forcibly gave it the name Tao. Only thereafter it can be talked about. Hence the saying "The Tao that can be traced as a way is not the eternal Tao. 27)

Here, in this passage, *Han-fei-tzu* explains the first chapter *Tao Te Ching* very clearly: Tao is eternal, but it also "is not inherent in an eternal place." The same book further explains:

Tao is the way of everything, the form of every principle. Principles are the lines that complete things. Tao is the cause of the completion of everything. Hence the saying "It is Tao that rules everything." Things have their respective principles and therefore cannot trespass against each other. Inasmuch as things have their respective principles and therefore cannot trespass against each other, principles are determinants of things and everything has a unique principle and Tao disciplines the principles of all things, everything has to go through the process of transformation. Inasmuch as everything has to go through the process of transformation, it has no fixed frame. Since everything has no fixed frame, the course of life and death depends upon Tao, the wisdom of the the myriad kinds conforms to it, and the rise and fall of the myriad affairs is due to it. 28)

Here *Han-fei-tzu* explains that Tao "has no fixed frame" on the one hand; yet on the other hand, "Tao disciplines the principles of all things." Tao, therefore is formless. It is neither square nor round; yet it can make things into square and round. This is what "has no fixed frame" means. This also explains the sentence: "is not inherent in an eternal place."

27) *The Complete works*, I., pp. 194-195.

28) *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192.

(3) Tao is "so large that nothing can exist outside it; and it is so small that nothing can exist within it." In the chapter "yüan-yü" of *Ch'u-tz'u* or *The Song of the South*, there is a statement:

The Way can only be received, it cannot be given.
 Small, it has no content; great, it has no bounds.
 Keep your soul from confusion, and it will come naturally.
 Unify the essences and control the spirit; preserve them inside you in the midnight hour.
 Await it in emptiness, before even Inaction.
 All other things proceed from this; this is the Door of Power.²⁹⁾

Here, the Power is derived from the Tao and all things obtained it from the Tao and thus became myriad things. This is why the poem states "All other things proceed from this." "The Door of Power" as referred to in the poem probably is what *Tao Te Ching* termed "The door of all subtleties" (I) or "The gate of the subtle and profound female." (VI)

The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* stated:

The heaven as the Law, the power as the action, the Tao as the ancestor. To transform within things but not to be ended nor exhausted with things. The Essence fills [the space between] heaven and earth inexhaustably, the spirit returns to cosmos and thus cannot be seen: No one knows its beginning, no one knows its end, no one knows its manifestations (*luan*) and no one knows its source (*yüan*). It is so large that nothing can exist outside it; it is so small that nothing can exist within it. This is called the most noble.³⁰⁾

"The heaven as the Law, the power as the action, the Tao as the ancestor" mentioned in this passage, describe the qualities of a "scholar of Tao." From "to transform within things..." and onward is the description of Tao itself. "This is called the most noble" refers to the Tao itself. There is no doubt that only the Tao is the most noble in Taoist minds.

29) D. Hawkes, translation of *Ch'u Tzu, The Songs of the South*, (Oxford, 1959), p. 83. Creel thought that the poem quoted here was not written by Ch'ü Yüan, but he agreed that the poem "Yüan-yü" or "the Far-off Journey" had "uses Tao in the Taoist sense...", Creel, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14. It seems that all authorities on Taoism are in agreement on the Taoist nature of the poem. Cf. H. Maspero, *Le Taoïsme*, (Paris 1950 edited by Paul Demieville), pp. 202-204; and Fung's paper in the *Symposium*, p. 87. The closest parallels in *Tao Te Ching* are "Tao is empty. It may be used but its capacity is never exhausted" (IV) and "The Great Tao flows everywhere. It may go left or right." (XXXIV)

30) *Lü, op. cit.*, p. 94.

Tao is the Force of Essence (*ching-ch'i*), which is the subtlest and minutest, and there is nothing smaller than it. It cannot contain anything within it nor can it be divided further. That is why the statement says: "It is so small that nothing can exist within it." However, as it fills up the whole space, that is why it has been described as "It is so large that nothing can exist outside it."

The *Tao Te Ching* has a similar statement that "Tao is eternal and has no name. Though its simplicity seems insignificant, none in the world can master it." (XXXII) The word "insignificant" is a translation of original Chinese character *hsiao* or "small"; therefore, it is parallel with the statement of "It is so small that nothing can exist within it." In chapter XXVIII of *Tao Te Ching*, it has been stated that "He will never deviate from eternal virtue, but returns to the state of the non-ultimate." The quotation seems to be another expression of "It is so large that nothing can exist outside it."

(4) Another characteristic of Tao is that "It operates everywhere." The *Tao Te Ching* states:

There was something undifferentiated and yet complete,
Which existed before heaven and earth.
Soundless and formless, it depends on nothing and does not change.
It operates everywhere and is free from danger.
It may be considered the mother of universe. (XXV)

What is meant by "It operates everywhere"? The terms 'creation' and 'disappear', which have already been quoted from *Han-fei-tzu*³¹) yield some clues. It means that originally, there was undifferentiated Original Force (*yüan-ch'i*); after the process of 'creation' it became heaven and earth that is the meaning of: "The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth." (I) However, heaven and earth are not eternal and they should have their moment of extinction. How will they be extinguished? That is the 'disappear', which means to scatter into the Undifferentiated Force again. Heaven and earth are as such, and so the myriad things produced by them. This is explained by *Tao Te Ching* as "All things flourish, But each one returns to its root." (XVI) This is also the meaning of "It reverts to nothingness." (XIV) In this manner, heaven and earth and all things within them, develop from the beginning to the end in a circular movement. In Taoist ter-

31) The *Complete works*, p. 194.

minology, it is called *chou-hsin* which Chan has translated as “operates everywhere”; Waley as “All pervading”; and Lau as “Goes round.” *Chou* means ‘circular’. Here it can be understood as revolving, or the circular movement; and it is Tao that “Goes round”: The *Tao Te Ching* states:

I know not its name,
So I style it ‘the way’.
I give it the makeshift name of ‘the great’.
Being great, it is further described as receding,
Receding, it is described as far away,
Being far away, it is described as turning back.

(XXV, Lau)

Here the words ‘receding’, ‘far away’ and ‘returning back’ are the descriptive words of *chou-hsing* or ‘Goes round’. And so is the word ‘returns’ as it has already been quoted from chapter XVI.

In the “Huan-tao” (‘the Round Tao’) chapter of the *Lü-shih ch’un-ch’iu*, it is stated that “The essence functions in four seasons. Parts of it go up and parts down. And when they merge it is called the Round Tao.”³²) The book further states that “when a thing is in motion it begins to sprout; from sprout it produces; from producing it grows; from growth it becomes large; from large it completes; from the completion it decays; from the decay it dies; with death it disappears. This is the [motions of] Round Tao.” The Round Tao is another way or words for “Goes round.” “Goes round” is the principal function of Tao; this is the reason why the same text states: “The Round Tao is one... myriad things respect it as their ancestor.”³³)

In the chapter “Ta-yüeh” of the same book, there is another statement:

The Supreme One (*t’ai-i*) produces the Two Forms (*liang-i*), from the Two Forms there come *yin* and *yang*. When transform, *yang* goes up and *yin* down. Manifestation is accomplished when the two are in union. Undifferentiated and confusing, separated and reunited, united and separated again, this is called the eternity of heaven. The heaven and earth resemble a wheel of vehicle, it begins again when it revolved to an end; and it reverse back when it reaches to an extreme in one direction. But all transformations are right. Sun, moon and stars move with slower or faster speed, yet because of move-

32) *Lü, op. cit.*, p. 22a.

33) *Ibid.*, p. 22a-b. Cf. fn. 26.

ments of sun and moon, all functions become possible: the four seasons succeed one another, some of them hot and some cold, some longer and some shorter, some stronger and some weaker.³⁴⁾

The sentence "Undifferentiated and confusing, separated and reunited, united and separated again, this is call the eternity of heaven" means that originally, there was a state of undifferentiation and confusion, and it is through the process of creation (*p'ao-p'an*) that things become distinctive. This is the meaning of 'separation' or 'separated'. Myriad things are created through the process of separation or differentiation. Though they are from separation, yet they will reunite. This is what has been described as 'return' in *Tao Te Ching*:

But each one returns to its root.
This return to its root means tranquility,
It is called returning to its destiny.
To return to destiny is called the eternal (Tao). (XVI)

The "eternity of heaven" as mentioned in *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* is the "Goes round" or "returns to its root" as mentioned in *Tao Te Ching*. It is not only that myriad things are under going through the process of 'Goes round', but even heaven and earth are also under the same process. This is the meaning of "The heaven and earth resemble a wheel of vehicle, it begins again when it revolved to an end..."

(5) And finally, the most important characteristic of Tao is that it is a combination of both being and non-being. In the first chapter of *Tao Te Ching*, the book declares that "Therefore let there always be non-being, so we may see their subtlety, and let there always be being, so we may see their outcome." In the translation of Waley, the passage is translated as this:

Truly 'only he that rids himself forever of desire can see the Secret Essences'; He that has never rid himself of desire can see only the outcomes. (p. 141)

If one follows the translations made by Waley or Lau, reading 'desire' with 'rids' and 'never rid' etc. together, the text would mean that if Man wishes to see the Secret Essence or Subtlety or the vacuous and non-being state of Tao, he has to get rid of his desires. It is only after his mind reaches to a state of emptiness, then he will be able

34) *Ibid.*, p. 30a.

to comprehend the Subtlety or 'Secret' of Tao. However, if Man wishes to see the state of 'all things flourish', he should have desire in his mind and then he will be able to comprehend it through distinctive conceptions; and that is the 'outcomes' of Tao. The passage explained that Tao has two aspects: Tao is empty or non-being on the one hand; and it has distinctive conceptions or being on the other. When summed up, Tao is the union of being and non-being or the differentiated and the undifferentiated.

If one wishes to read the word 'desire' separated from the other words as in the translation of Chan, there is nothing that is objectionable. *Tao Te Ching* itself has clearly stated that "Tao is eternal and has no name" (XXXII) or "the Way is forever nameless" (Lau). Non-being (*wu*) seemed to be an abbreviation of nameless (*Wu-ming*); thus "forever is nameless" can be read as "always be non-being" (*ch'ang-wu*). The statement "Only that which begins with creation of heaven and earth and neither dies nor declines till heaven and earth disappear can be said to be eternal,"³⁵) as has already been quoted from *Han-fei-tzu*, explains the same subject, namely, the being aspect of Tao. It means that Tao reveals its secret or subtlety through non-being; and its outcomes through being.

Here the terms "always being" and "always non-being" are not merely abstract concepts but rather have concrete contents: "Non-being refers to the formless and nameless Primal Force (*yüan-ch'i*) or Force of Essence (*ching-ch'i*). The word "being" also refers to concrete subjects, namely heaven, earth and myriad things, especially heaven and earth. Because of this, Tao on the one hand "there is in in the form," "in it are things" and "in it is the essence" (XXI). And on the other hand, it is also "invisible," "inaudible" and "formless" (XIV).

There are many passage in *Tao Te Ching* where being means heaven and earth. For example:

The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;
The Named is the mother of all things. (I)

The passage, however, can also read as follows:

Non-being is the name of the origin of Heaven and World;
Being is the name of the mother of all things.

35) The *Complete works*, p. 194.

These two readings are different, but the difference is not so significant as their contents are more or less the same. The remarkable fact is that in these two different readings, heaven and earth are mentioned as the oppositions to all things. In Fung's view, those are not different meanings deducted from different texts, but both are explaining the same subject, the cosmology of Taoists. These Taoists thought that at first, there were undifferentiated Primal Forces; heaven and earth were then differentiated; and, finally, myriad things were further differentiated from heaven and earth. Therefore, heaven and earth are the mother of all things. They are the named or have names and that is why they were called as being. The *Tao Te Ching* therefore declares:

All things in the world come from being.
And being comes from non-being. (XL)

Here being means heaven and earth; "being comes from non-being" is another expression of "The Named is the mother of all things." (I) The text explicitly stated that "all things in the world come from being," but not "heaven and earth." This difference is very significant as in the original text, the two phrases have only one word different, namely *t'ien-hsia wan-wu* ('all things in the world') and *t'ien-ti wan-wu* ('heaven-earth and all things'). Though the difference is only in one word yet it is very important as many people quoted passages from chapters LI, IV and LII thus questioned the interpretation of only heaven and earth are the mother of all thing. In those chapters, it has been clearly stated that "Tao produced them" etc. There is another question against the interpretation which arises from chapter XXI which states that "It serves as a means for inspecting the fathers of the multitude" (Lau, p. 78). In Chan's translation, word "fathers" is read as "beginnings." Fung's explanation is this: if Tao produces all things, it is then the father of all things. In that case why should it be described as "for inspecting the fathers..."?

In Fung's opinion, the passage does not conflict with his interpretation. To say that this man is that man's father does not mean that the father has no father of his own. It is like one claims that this tree has grown out of that tree; yet that tree has grown from another tree. This is the reason why it is termed as a plural, fathers. However, in the case of Tao, the book stated "I do not know whose

son it is," (IV), henceforth, it is the father of fathers, but itself never the son. From the Taoist theory of "Goes round" one may claim that all things are produced from Tao, so "Tao produces them" (LI); however, Tao is formless and nameless; whereas things are with form and have names. As the Taoist holds that heaven and earth is the beginning of the named and the greatest amongst the named, so they are regarded as the mother of all things. The claim, therefore, does not conflict with fathers of each individual thing.

The formation of the concept "Goes round" in *Tao Te Ching* is a very significant contribution to the history of Chinese thought. This is so because there were theories like *yin/yang* and the Five Elements during the pre-*Tao Te Ching* period, nonetheless, there was never an explicit statement which claimed that all things were produced from *yin/yang* and the Five Elements first, and then returned to them again. The "Goes round" theory in *Tao Te Ching* is the earliest Chinese statement which declared explicitly that the *ch'i* or Forces are the fundamental material and it is identifiable with Tao. All things came out from Tao and ultimately return to Tao. In conclusion, Fung considers that the philosophy of *Tao Te Ching* fits very well with the description of primitive and spontaneous materialism as given by F. Engels.³⁶⁾

III

The conclusion of Fung and his sympathizers immediately received strong objections from the radical Marxist philosophers in China. To a large extent, the publication of *Lao-tzu che-hsüeh t'ao-lun chi* ('*A Symposium on the philosophy of Lao-tzu*') is one of the results of the controversy.

The scholars who opposed Fung's interpretation of Tao as *ch'i* or subtlest material are quite a few; and their views were listed by Jen Chi-yü when he wrote the survey of Chinese studies on Lao-tzu in 1959.³⁷⁾ These are their views:

- (1) Tao is the last, ontological and abstract concept of whole cosmos and things. It is formless and incognizable by sense.
- (2) Tao is transcendent to time, space and human experiences.

36) *Symposium*, p. 115.

37) Jen Chi-yü and Feng Ching-yüan, "Lao-tzu ti yen-chiu" ('Studies on Lao-tzu'), in *Symposium*, pp. 15 ff. also Chan, *Bibliography*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

- (3) The Tao of *Tao Te Ching* is non-being. Hence the view that non-being produces being cannot be interpreted as materialism.
- (4) As Tao is called the One, hence it is an abstract and mathematic concept.
- (5) The Tao represents the law of nature, thus *Tao Te Ching* adopts the words One (*i*) or Profound (*hsüan*) to indicate material totality. Tao is above the One and Profound. This can be testified by chapter XLII.
- (6) The pattern of materialist philosophy in ancient times was usually by take up one or a few concrete elements from the world, and regard it or them as the origin of the cosmos.
- (7) *Tao Te Ching* disregarded sense experiences, but respected profound insight (*hsüan-lan*) and tranquil observation (*ching-kuan*) as the sources of knowledge. Hence it is far away from the pattern of ancient materialisms.

Those who reject *Tao Te Ching* or *Lao-tzu* as materialist and consider it as idealistic are however, not in total agreement among themselves: some of them thought the philosophy is totally idealistic; some considered that there are certain materialistic tendencies within the framework of idealism. The latter took Taoist concept of heaven as an example to illustrate their viewpoint, and says the concept is naturalistic and therefore inclined to material elements.

The survey made by Jen Chi-yü mentioned above, summarized views of Chinese scholarship during the fifties, but their views are, perhaps, still upheld by the writers. As far as this writer's information goes, many scholars have changed their opinions on Confucian philosophy in recent campaign of anti-Confucianism; yet Taoist philosophy has been left unattacked so far.

Though some of the Chinese writers wrote their criticisms with political motives, yet some of them had criticised Fung with abundant evidences from *Tao Te Ching*. It will be scholarly unfair if one simply ignores these textual evidences as political propaganda. Yet, at the same time, any adequate presentation of those evidence will make this paper out of proportion. The only feasible way to do the work is to choose one of the most representative works of the opponents, thus to indicate how and on what grounds Fung has been criticised. For that purpose, the paper of Kuan Feng and Lin Lü-shih is typical.

In their paper "Lun Lao-tzu che-hsüeh t'i-hsi ti wei-hsin-chu-i pen-chih" or "On the fundamental, idealistic nature of Lao-tzu's system of philosophy,"³⁸) the two critics had first defined Tao as the unity of "always being" and "always non-being," as emptiness or vacuousness, transcendence of time and space, and the source of myriad things and cosmos. However, they still think Tao is not atom nor essence and thus they do not belong to the category of materials. They pointed out that the word "one," as mentioned in chapter XIV though looks close to the description of atom as it is invisible, inaudible and un-touchable; yet the "one" is not Tao. According to chapter XLII: "Tao produced the one." At the same time, one has to remember that the book also said that "All beings in the world come from being. And being comes from non-being." (XL) Therefore, the one is being and Tao is non-being. Moreover, the text also said: "Infinite and boundless, it cannot be given any name." (XIV) In other words, the "one" ultimately will return to non-being. If the "one" is produced from and finally returned to Tao, then it is obvious that it differs from Tao.

The two authors further pointed out that Tao is not the Force of Essence (*ching-ch'i*). In *Tao Te Ching*, only the word *ching* but not the phrase *ching-ch'i* were found. The word is mentioned in chapters XXI and LV. The text only stated: "Deep and obscure, in it is the essence. The essence is very real..." or "his essence at its height." However, in both case, the word *essence* stood alone; and the second quotation even has nothing to do with Tao itself. Under these circumstances, how can one interpret the word *ching* as found in *Tao Te Ching* with the phrase of *ching-ch'i* or Force of Essence as mentioned in *Kuan-tzu*? They thought that the word *ching* is interchangeable with word *ch'ing* (reality) as mentioned in *Chuang-tzu* (VI), which states: "The Way has its reality and its signs."³⁹) What about the chapters of *Kuan-tzu* which Fung has quoted elaborately? The two scholars considered that though these are Taoist documents of Sung/

38) The paper is in their book, *Ch'un-ch'iu che-hsüeh-shih lun-chi* ('Essays on the history of Philosophy of the Spring and Autumn Period'), (Peking, 1963), pp. 274-330. Apart from this, Kuan has another paper on the relevant topic, "Lun Sung/Yin hsüeh-p'ai" ('On the school of Sung and Yin'), *Che-hsüeh yen-chü* ('Philosophical Studies'), vol. V (1959), pp. 28-45.

39) From the translation of B. Watson, *Chuang-tzu, the Complete Works*, (New York, 1971), p. 81.

Yin school, materialistic but quite different from those of *Tao Te Ching*.

Kuan and Lin also thought that Tao is not the undifferentiated material as it has been interpreted by Fung. Though they conceded that in chapter XXV of *Tao Te Ching*, it has been stated that there are somethings 'undefined' (Legge, I. 67) or 'formless' (Waley, 174) or 'undifferentiated' (Chan) or 'confusedly' (Lau, 82), nonetheless, this is merely a description of the undifferentiated nature of Tao, but does not mean Tao is the undifferentiated material. From this, they pointed out that Tao does not belong to the materialistic category. The textual evidences put forward by the two are from chapter XXI, XLII, LX, especially XXI.

In his rejoinder, Fung pointed out that his opponent has wrongly read "The thing that is called Tao..." (Chan) as "Tao produces things." The word which Chan translated as "that," Waley as "for" and Lau as "as" is *wei*. Fung obviously understood the word as an adverb or conjunction where his opponents read it as a verb, and thus it means "to do, to make..." Fung also says apart from *ching*, the word *ch'i* or breath should not be left out. In his view, the word *ch'i* (Waley translated it as "yin, yang and blended") as mentioned in *Tao Te Ching* is identifiable with *ho-ch'i* (harmoneous breath) of *Han-fei-tzu*, *t'ien-ho* (heavenly harmony) of *Chuang-tzu*, and *ching-ch'i* (Force of Essence) of *Kuan-tzu*.⁴⁰

The foregoing debates have touched upon a number of problems. The most striking fact is that the papers collected in the *Symposium* did not produce any agreement. As the contributors themselves did not want or could not achieve an all-agreed conclusion, we need not pretend to present ourselves as arbitrator in the ideological controversy. However, if one considers the tendency of classical Chinese thought in general, and *Tao Te Ching* in particular as the "both-and" types as it has been termed by Charles A. Moore, I wonder how far it can be satisfactorily to interpret in terms of the Western pattern of thinking, which Moore has termed as "either-or"?⁴¹ As the book laid its emphases both on non-being and being, and it had never been exposed to the clear-cut division between idealism and materialism at

40) Fung, *Essays*, *op. cit.*, 2nd sr. p. 241.

41) Moore, *The Chinese Mind, Essentials of Chinese Philosophy and Culture*, (Honolulu, 1967), p. 6.

the time of its formation, and, therefore, any one-sided conclusion would be a superimposition rather than a representation of the original ideas of the book.

If however, it be looked at from other angles, the debate is important both for the assessment of the Chinese philosophical tradition as well as for an understanding of Fung's own thought. Its importance to the Chinese tradition has two respects: first, how to educate Chinese youth with the classical Taoism through Marxist terminology? Second, what will be the place of Taoism in China? The latter is particularly significant and crucial as it may affect the value and inheritance of Taoism in contemporary China. As far as our meeting at Syracuse is concerned, the information of the controversy may be useful for us to understand Tao in Western philosophical terminology; and scholarly views of the Chinese in our times.

As far as Fung's thought is concerned, his definition of Tao in his early writings are well-known: that he defined Tao as "the first all-embracing principle whereby all things are produced," "the Unnamable," "the Invariable Law of Nature" ... ⁴²) If these early definitions are compared with the forementioned five points of the new definition, one finds his new works are more systematic, comprehensive and ideological. It is systematic because he has lately discussed Taoist philosophy in a more articulated way; it is more comprehensive because he reviewed Taoist tradition from a much broader angle and with a wider range of materials; and it is more ideological because the debates were carried out in the terms of Marxist terminology. From textual viewpoints, Fung had limited his materials to *Chuang-tzu* and *Han-fei-tzu* in his early interpretations of *Tao Te Ching*; now he has extended it to other works of the same period, the *Kuan-tzu*, the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, the *Ch'u-tz'u* and the *Huai-nan-tzu*. Whether one agrees or disagrees with his new interpretation, one point is clear that the aging philosopher still continues his effort and contribution for the understanding of Chinese philosophy.

IV

The interpretation of Tao as the subtlest force (*ch'i*), and the

42) See Fung, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, pp. 177 ff.; and *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. by D. Bodde, (New York), pp. 94 ff.

description of the force as quoted from *Kuan-tzu* and *the Songs of the South* raises another question, namely the origin of Taoist thought in China and the possible influence from India. Since Waley⁴³⁾ and H. Maspero⁴⁴⁾ first drew scholars' attention to the similarity between Indian Yogic techniques of breath control with those mentioned in the ancient Taoist texts, more scholars have expressed their opinions on the subject. In recent years, Liebenthal⁴⁵⁾ and Bisson⁴⁶⁾ have put forward some parallel texts between the Upanishad and the early Taoist texts. Though those scholars all put question marks at the end of their enquiry, yet all of them rather inclined to argue for an Indian influence upon Taoism. In spite of some objections to the notion made by Eliade⁴⁷⁾ and Welch,⁴⁸⁾ the problem still persists. Being part of a panel on *Tao Te Ching*, it seems to be the most appropriate place to raise the question again.

As far the the Religious Taoism is concerned, there is no doubt that it has been influenced by Buddhism in various facets. The problem is whether the ancient Taoist philosophers were influenced by Indian Yogic techniques? The situation has been summarised very well by Needham. He says that "In the realm of philosophical theory and practice, determined efforts have been made to show that early Taoism owed much both to the Indian Upanishad literature for its theory."⁴⁹⁾ Needham's statement is based on the works by Bagchi and Wieger respectively. As far as Wieger is concerned, his works are more collections of texts with his translations rather than critical scholarship,

43) Waley, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-120, 213-214.

44) H. Maspero, "Les procedes de 'Nourrir le principe vital' dans la religion Taoiste ancienne", *Journal Asiatique*, CCXXVII (1937), pp. 177-252, 353-430.

45) W. Liebenthal, "Lord *Atman* in the *Lao-tzu*", *Monumenta Serica*, vol. XXVII (1968), 374-380. Other parallels had also been noted by S. Radhakrishnan in his *India and China*, (Bombay, 1954), pp. 97 ff. The latter however only stated that "Taoist metaphysics is close to the Upanishadic thought and its discipline to the Yoga technique". (p. 177). But he refused to go further and to claim the Indian influence on Taoism.

46) T. A. Bisson, "Some parallels in Upanisadic and Taoist Writings: Could India have influenced classical Taoism?" a paper read before the XXVII International Congress of Orientalists, Ann Arbor, 1967 though, I am unable to find relevant data of the publication.

47) M. Eliade, *Yoga Immortality and Freedom*, (Princeton, 1969), pp. 59 ff.

48) Welch, *op. cit.*, pp. 71 ff.

49) J. Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. I (Cambridge, 1954), pp. 152-153; also vol. II (Cambridge, 1969), p. 144 fn.

and most of his opinions are out of date. In case of Bagchi, his opinion seems to be misquoted. It is true Bagchi has stated that "There is no doubt a close similarity between this conception of Tao and that of the Upanishadic Brahman" ⁵⁰); yet the same author concluded in the same book by stating: "The analogy can be carried even farther. . . . It is impossible to maintain that Tao was a borrowed conception." He further explained his reason: "There is no evidence of any contact between India and China before the first century B.C. The ancient Taoism was by then a fullen developed philosophy." His final conclusion is "Tao was a logical development of some of the old Chinese religious ideas." ⁵¹)

If Bagchi's historical argument is acceptable, what about the literary evidences as forwarded by Liebenthal and Bisson? In the first place, Liebenthal's linguistic argument is far from convincing. The parallels he and Bisson pointed out can be explained by historical reasons. Bagchi expressed himself very well by saying that on the one hand, "it quite clear that the philosophy of Lao-tseu and the Upanishadic philosophy had some striking similarities"; ⁵²) yet on the other, "It is impossible to maintain that Tao was a borrowed conception." If historical probability does not exist, why then the similarities? "The similarity was due to a natural and inevitable development of similar religious ideas of a more distant past. As in China, so also in India the old religion gave rise to ritualism (*karma*) on the one hand and philosophy (*jnāna*) on the other." ⁵³)

Apart from the historical reasons raised by Bagchi which seem to be more convincing, one may also consider the problem from contextual viewpoint. Most scholars would agree that in the first place, the date of Upanishad literature is a matter of great dispute, and non-reference to them in early Buddhist literature would place some Upanishads in a much later period. In the second place, most scholars also agree that Upanishads were more esoteric as they were transmitted from teacher to qualified disciples individually, but not open to the public. In this connection, one has to remember that it took about 400 years or more for the Chinese to understand Buddhism, the other

50) P. C. Bagchi, *India and China*, (New York, 1951), p. 189.

51) *Ibid.*, p. 190.

52) *Ibid.*

53) *Ibid.*

Indian religion, which was much more open. At the time when *Tao Te Ching* was compiled, probably somewhere around 300 B.C. when the communication between India and China was much less developed than during the time of the introduction of Buddhism, the borrowing or assimilation of Upanishadic ideas becomes even more impossible.

From a doctrinal viewpoint, the improbability is equally strong. "The Upanishads are metaphysical commentaries on the Vedas... Their strongly marked metaphysical idealism, with its conception of the unity of the *Brahman* and the *atman*, the absolute and the self, is not at all characteristic of the Taoists." 54) In any case, the present state of research and evidence does not support the contention of the Upanishadic influence on ancient Taoism. Although Needham has noticed that "the influence of Yoga practices, especially the breathing exercise ... upon early Taoism, a better case can be made out," 55) yet he also noted that "it was not universal as Chuang Tzu has a passage condemning it." 56) In spite of some similarities in techniques, "the constant and primary preoccupation of China remains indefinite prolongation of life of the material body, whereas India is obsessed by the idea of a spiritual freedom to be conquered through transfiguration, 'deification,' of the body," as it has been pointed out by Eliade. 57) The conclusions made by Needham agrees with that of Eliade though the former has more to say: he notes that the aims of Taoist concentration are entirely different from those of Indian *rishis*. He says "the Indians sought for an ascetic virtue which would enable them to dominate the gods themselves (Wilkins), the Taoists sought a material immortality in a universe in which there were no gods to overcome, and asceticism was only one of the methods which they were prepared to use to attain their end." 58) If these points are considered together with the similar objection as expressed by Welch, 59) the Yogic influence upon Taoism becomes more unlikely.

The main reason for scholars searching for the foreign origin of

54) Needham, *op. cit.*, I, p. 153.

55) *Ibid.*, and Needham also refers to J. Filliozat's paper, "Taoisme et Yoga", *Dai Viet-nam*, 3/1 (1949).

56) Needham, *ibid.*

57) Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

58) Needham, *op. cit.*, p. 153 and his assessment on Indian Yoga is based on W. J. Wilkins, *Hindu Mythology, Vedic and Puranic*, (Calcutta, 1913; p. 330).

59) Welch, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

the Chinese tradition was that they had a static notion of Chinese civilization. Any fact incongruous with their notion would be regarded by them as 'foreign'.⁶⁰⁾ They do not see, however, that most of their knowledge on China was mainly based on fragmentary researches or on the main streams of pre-modern Chinese scholarship. There is no doubt that new researches will be shocking to a number scholars like that of Needham's shocking to historians of science. In this connection, Fung's new theory about the source of early Taoist philosophy is worthy of noting. He suggests that it is probably that the Taoist thinkers had some benefit from the ancient Chinese medical experiences.

Fung argued it in this way: though there were different branches of early Taoism, yet the central line of thought was always the 'self'. In other words, 'I' or one's life is the most important to the Taoists. The aim of medical science is to protect life; and the way to do it is to control diseases which come from nature. Medical science is a knowledge Man obtained through his experiences against nature. Early Taoist likely derived their knowledge from medical achievement of the age, developed and systematized it, and made it their own philosophy.⁶¹⁾

According to *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, that "Shaman P'eng acted in medicines; and shaman Hsien acted in divination."⁶²⁾ This indicates that the Chinese medical science originated in Shamanism. To a certain extent, the religious wing of Shamanism usually distorted man's understanding of nature; whereas the medical wing of Shamanism made corrections on the distortion. For example, most medical men did not believe that diseases were punishment from god though diviners would act in other direction. Though Fung's argument on the origin of Taoist thought was based more on the sources from other Taoistic texts and does not much concern with *Tao Te Ching*, yet from religious and historical viewpoint, it is interesting. It is so because his new theory supports the contention of Eliade, who states that "there

60) Needham had a good outline on the topic. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 151 ff.

61) *Symposium*, pp. 88 ff.

62) *Lü, op. cit.*, ch. xvii, p. 116b. Creel explained the passage very well: "From an early day there were individuals known as *wu*, of ten called 'shamans', who held seances with spirits and were believed able to heal the sick. The invention of medicine is attributed to a certain *wu*...", *op. cit.*, p. 12.

were in China certain archaic techniques, shamanic in structure, the purpose of which was to imitate the respiration of animals.”⁶³⁾ Should the Taoist breath control techniques and philosophy both be based on ancient Chinese tradition, the theory of the foreign origin of Taoism would lose ground. And the un-Chinese feeling of Taoism that have been felt by some scholars, will become uncalled for.

63) Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

THE ITALIAN CONNECTION: AN ASPECT OF THE CULT OF MEN

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In 1937, C. W. M. Cox and A. Cameron published the following inscription, ¹⁾ discovered at Avdan, near Eskişehir (ancient Dorylaeum), Turkey:

Οὐεζαεῖται
Μηνιῖ Ἰταλ[ι]χῶ
ἐξ ἐπιτα[γ]ῆς

They comment: "The god's title is surprising. The known geographical titles of Men are not derived from outside Asia Minor." As far as I know, no scholarly attempt has been made to elucidate this inscription. The present article will be an attempt to show that the unusual epithet for Men is not an isolated phenomenon, but fits into a consistent pattern within the known evidence concerning this cult.

I. One of the most widespread epithets borne by the moon-god Men is *Askaenos*. It is recorded on coins of Sardis, ²⁾ and on inscriptions from many sites in Caria, Phrygia, and Pisidia, ³⁾ being the epithet with which Men was regularly worshipped at the great cult-center of Pisidian Antioch. Two inscriptions of Antioch, ⁴⁾ both in

1) *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*, V, no. 150. Reprinted E. N. Lane *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis Dei Menis* (CMRDM), I, Leiden 1971, no. 93.

2) CMRDM, II, Leiden, 1974, Sardis 1-4.

3) CMRDM, I, 87 (near Alia), 101 (Eumeneia), 105 (Appola), 106 (near Laodiceia Combusta), 107 (Selmea), 118-120 (Aphrodisias), 130 (Apollonia Pisidia), 131 (Anaboura), and 181, 183, 184, 186, 191, 194, 196, 198, 199, 201-203, 209 219, 221, 228, 233, 235, 238-241, 243, 245, 246, 252, 253, 258-260, 262, 264, 267, 273-275, 278, 281, 283, 286, 287, 289, 291-294 (Antioch).

4) CMRDM, I, nos. 162-163. The first of these calls Men Ἀσκαίης ναέτην the second Ἀσκαίης τῶ μεδέοντι θεῶ

verse, inform us that this epithet was considered to be connected with a place-name, *Askaie*. In general, this has been held to be a particular locality which gave rise to the epithet.⁵⁾ At the same time, however, scholars have recognized the connection of the name with a much wider range of mythological and geographical nomenclature. The most obvious example is that of Aeneas' son Ascanius⁶⁾ in Vergil's *Aeneid*, as well as a host of mythical⁷⁾ and real place names in Anatolia, of which the most significant are perhaps the two lakes, that of Iznik and that of Burdur, both of which went by the name *Askania Limne* in antiquity.⁸⁾ I submit, therefore, that it is futile to look for a specific place or places to connect with the epithet *Askaenos*, but that in Roman times, at least, *Men Askaenos* could be viewed as meaning simply the Anatolian Men. Furthermore, since the publication of the *Aeneid*, at any rate, the name had Roman overtones: the Anatolian Men with strong emphasis on the supposed racial connection between Anatolians and Romans. Now, although it cannot be said that the worship of *Men Askaenos* was a Roman invention or introduction at Antioch in Pisidia,⁹⁾ it is reasonable to suppose that the cult found official Roman favor by reason of the supposed Italian connection outlined above, and that that may even have been a factor in the selection of the site for a Roman colony in the time of Augustus.¹⁰⁾

5) E.g., W. M. Calder, *JRS*, 2, 1912, p. 95, who connects it with the Antioch Valley. Typical are the remarks of Drexler, writing before the discovery of nos. 162-163 in W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, II, 2, col. 2749: „Der Beiname (ist) von einer oder, wie ich glaube, von mehreren bestimmten Ortschaften herzuleiten . . .”

6) It seems clear that Vergil deliberately used this name to underscore the old connection of Aeneas with Anatolia, and that is why so much is made of the change of the boy's name to Iulus while on the way to Italy. Significantly, one of the dedicators of *CMRDM*, I, 214, bears the name Askanios. Cf. my observations *ad loc.*

7) *Iliad*, 2, 863; 13, 793.

8) For other connected place-names see Pape-Benseler, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Eigennamen*, Braunschweig, 1911 (repr. Graz, 1954) s.v. Ἀσκανία. Lower into regular period.

9) The evidence of Strabo, XII, 577, is against that, as well as the pre-Roman coinage of Antioch.

10) For Men-worship in other Roman colonies, see the coins of Olbasa and Parlais, listed in *CMRDM*, II.

II. The parallels for *Men Italikos* do not stop here, however. In 1962 Peter Herrmann published a Lydian inscription¹¹⁾ in which Men is addressed as follows:

Μέγας Μεῖς Ἀξιοττηνὸς Τάρσι βασιλεύων

Tarsi, it would seem, is another place in Asia Minor which is as hard to localize as is *Askaie*. The place name is connected with a number of divine epithets—Apollo Tarsios;¹²⁾ Meter Tarsene, who occurs in conjunction with Apollo Tarsios;¹³⁾ Apollo Tarsenos, of Soma in the upper Caicos valley in Mysia¹⁴⁾—as well as the city of Tarsus in Cilicia and a variety of place-names in Bithynia and Mysia.¹⁵⁾

Bearing in mind that we are not concerned here with the reality or irreality of etymologies and derivations, but merely with what may have been believed and believable in the Roman Imperial period, there is the intriguing possibility that all these names may have been held to have been connected with the Etruscans, or as the Greeks called them, the *Tyrseioi*.¹⁶⁾ (Aeneas' men were not the only supposed emigrants from Anatolia to Italy.) Thus the supposed Italian connection for Men (and for these other gods) becomes stronger.

III. In 1936, L. Robert republished an inscription of Sardis with the following restoration:

11) *Ergebnisse einer Reise in Nordostlydien* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Denkschriften, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, 80, 1962), p. 30, no. 21; *CMRDM*, I, no. 69. Following Herrmann's suggestion, I wished to place Tarsi at Köleköy, but now reject that idea.

12) Herrmann, *Ergebnisse*, p. 41, nos. 31-33; *Archäologische Zeitung*, 38, 1880, p. 38; J. Keil and A. von Premesstein, *Bericht über eine Reise in Lydien* (ÖAW Denkschriften, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, 52, ii, 1908, no. 175; *IG*, II², 3003. All are from Lydia, except the last, which is from the Piraeus.

13) Herrmann, *Ergebnisse*, no. 18 (*CMRDM*, I, no. 47); *Musée Belge*, 11, 1907 p. 134. There is a possibility that Meter Tazene is merely a variant of the same thing; she is attested, with some variations in spelling, *CMRDM*, I, nos. 42 and 67; K. Buresch, *Aus Lydien*, Leipzig, 1898, p. 58 and p. 83, no. 40. Possibly connected also are the *Tazenon katoikia* of *CMRDM*, I, no. 62, and the *Tarsianoioi* of Herrmann, *Ergebnisse*, p. 5, no. 2. All this material is from a fairly circumscribed area of Lydia.

14) C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period*, New Haven, 1934, no. 47.

15) Buresch, *Aus Lydien*, p. 89; Pape-Benseler, s.v. Ταρσός.

16) Polybius, III, 82, 9, even eliminates the troublesome vowel-difference when he refers to Lake Trasimene as Ταρσιμένη Λίμνη.

[· · · · · M]ηνὸς Τυμωλεί[του]
 [καὶ τῶν θεῶν τ]ῶν ἄλλων πάν[των]
 [κεχολωμένων] τύχοιτο · · · · ·

(The context is one of punishments invoked on those who disturb a grave.) ¹⁷⁾

This is the only case which I know of in which Men bears the epithet *Tymoleitos*. Now this name not only has an obvious reference to Mt. Tmolus, lying just behind Sardis, but bears a striking resemblance to the Latin word "tumulus." ¹⁸⁾ What could be more natural for a protector of the grave? The word "tumulus" is particularly applicable to the Etruscan tombs, which, as is well known, resemble those in the royal necropolis in Sardis. Thus our epithet is also peculiarly applicable to this location, and the Italian connection is again present.

IV. Each of these pieces of evidence, in and of itself, might be dismissed as trivial and inconclusive. When put together, however, they point to a widespread belief that the cult of Men was both firmly rooted in ancient Anatolian tradition, and integrally connected with the supposed racial affinities between Anatolians and Italians. They also point to the possibility that the Men-cult was deliberately fostered by the Roman authorities in Asia Minor.

There are two coins which add further support to this latter conclusion. One is a cistophorus of Hadrian, ¹⁹⁾ with obverse, image of the emperor and inscription *Hadrianus Augustus P P*, and reverse, figure of Men with inscription *Cos III*. This coin occurs in a series of cistophoric tetradrachms, struck in Hadrian's reign for use in the province of Asia. The series shows a number of gods or mythological figures as reverse types, particularly such as are associated with the Asian cities: Zeus Labrandeus, Ephesian Artemis, Marsyas, etc. The conclusion is that Men was one of the divinities favored by Rome in its provincial policy in Asia.

The second is a coin of Galba, bearing on the obverse the effigy of the emperor and the inscription: Γάλβας Αὐτοκράτωρ Καῖσαρ Σεβαστός,

¹⁷⁾ *Revue Archéologique*, 1936, I, pp. 238-240 (*Opera Minora Selecta*, II, p. 1612); *CMRDM*, I, no. 81.

¹⁸⁾ Cf. Buresch, *Aus Lydien*, p. 60.

¹⁹⁾ *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, III, 1936, no. 1070.

on the reverse the figure of Men and the inscription: Σέρουιος Γάλβας Σεβαστός.²⁰) This coin has in general, in the past, been ascribed to Ancyra, presumably on the basis of iconographical type. (Men holding both patera and pine-cone seems to be a speciality of the Koinon of the Galatians.)²¹) But since no city is specified in the inscription, the coin has no definite tie with Ancyra (although it may have been minted there), and I would prefer to see it as an issue of the short-reigned emperor Galba, if not for all Roman possessions in Asia Minor, at least for the entire province of Galatia. In its way, then, this coin seems even more significant than the cistophorus of Hadrian, as the Roman officials of Galba's time chose only one god—Men—to represent them in their Anatolian dominions, as a symbol both of the Anatolian religious traditions and the justification through kinship of the Roman sway over Anatolia.

In short, then, the cult of the god Men seems deliberately to have been fostered as a unifying force by the Roman rulers in Asia Minor, and a mythology deliberately created, which, through epithets laden with legendary lore and clever use of word-resemblances, underscored the cult of Men as an integral part of the supposed racial relationship between the subject Anatolians and their Italian masters.²²)

20) Imhoof-Blumer, *Kleinasiatische Münzen*, II, Vienna, 1902, p. 495, Ancyra 1; *Hunterian Collection, Greek Coins*, Glasgow, 1899-1905, II, p. 567, Galatia 1; *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Great Britain*, IV, Fitzwilliam Museum, Pl. 113, no. 5383, etc.

21) I have pointed out elsewhere (*Berytus*, 17, 1967, pp. 42-44) that it is fanciful to take this coin as indicating identification of Men with the emperor. The cistophorus of Hadrian, which I did not consider at that time, merely strengthens my argument. If one applies the same line of reasoning to the Hadrianic cistophori as has been applied to the Galba coin—that the reverse inscription must apply to the reverse representation—then all the various divinities of the series are being identified with Hadrian and are being called *Cos. III!*

22) Cf. the similar conclusions reached by William Berg, *Numen*, 21, 1974, 128 ff., as to deliberate Roman support for the cult Hecate at Lagina. I do not wish to revive the discredited theories of W. M. Ramsay, as to the deliberate Roman creation of the *Xenoi Tekmoreioi* among peasants on imperial estates in order to combat Christianity. There are too many holes in it, such as the improbability of imperial estates in the area in question, and the lack of any obvious connection (beyond the use of the word τεκμορεύσας) between the *Xenoi* and Men-cult. See T. R. S. Broughton, *TAPA*, 65, 1934, 231 ff.; W. Ruge in Pauly-Wissowa *Realencyclopädie*, s.v. *Xenoi Tekmoreioi*; B. Levick, *JHS*, 91, 1971, 83 f. But the imaginative excesses of some of these earlier scholars should not blind us, by reaction, to the fact of deliberate Roman intervention, for propagandistic purposes, in the religious affairs of their Anatolian provinces.

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